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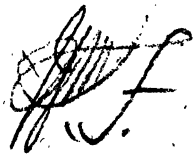

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

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THE LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS, WITH CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR WORKS.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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COWLEY.

THE Life of Cowley, notwithſtanding the penury of Engliſh biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat, an author whoſe pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deſervedly ſet him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendſhip, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a hiſtory: he has given the character, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with ſo little detail, that ſcarcely any thing is diſtinctly known, but all is ſhewn confuſed and enlarged through the miſt of panegyrick.

ABRAHAM COWLEY was born in the year one thouſand ſix hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whoſe con-

dition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen; and, what would probably not have been leſs carefully ſuppreſſed, the omiſſion of his name in the regiſter of St. Dunſtan's pariſh gives reaſon to ſuſpect that his father was a ſectary. Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his ſon, and conſequently left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood repreſents as ſtruggling earneſtly to procure him a literary education, and who, as ſhe lived to the age of eighty, had her ſolicitude rewarded by ſeeing her ſon eminent, and, I hope, by ſeeing him fortunate, and partaking his proſperity. We know at leaſt, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and juſtly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spenſer's Fairy Queen; in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verſe, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents which, ſometimes remembered, and perhaps ſometimes forgotten, produce that particular deſignation of mind, and propenſity for ſome certain

certain ſcience or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to ſome particular direction. Sir Joſhua Reynolds, the great Painter of the preſent age, had the firſt fondneſs for his art excited by the peruſal of Richardſon's treatiſe.

By his mother's ſolicitation he was admitted into Weſtminſter-ſchool, where he was ſoon diſtinguiſhed. He was wont, ſays Sprat, to relate, "That he had this defect "in his memory at that time, that his "teachers never could bring it to retain the "ordinary rules of grammar."

This is an inſtance of the natural deſire of man to propagate a wonder. It is ſurely very difficult to tell any thing as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative contained its confutation. A memory admitting ſome things, and rejecting others, an intellectual digeſtion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refuſed the huſks, had the appearance of an inſtinctive elegance, of a particular pro-

viſion made by Nature for literary politeneſs. But in the author's own honeſt relation, the marvel vaniſhes: he was, he ſays, ſuch "an "enemy to all conſtraint, that his maſter "never could prevail on him to learn the "rules without book." He does not tell that he could not learn the rules, but that, being able to perform his exerciſes without them, and being an "enemy to conſtraint," he ſpared himſelf the labour.

Among the Engliſh poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be ſaid "to liſp in "numbers;" and have given ſuch early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehenſion of things, as to more tardy minds ſeems ſcarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, ſince a volume of his poems was not only written but printed in his thirteenth year *; containing, with other poetical compoſitions, "The tragical Hiſtory of Pyramus

* This Volume was not publiſhed before 1633, when Cowley was fifteen years old. Dr. Johnſon, as well as former Biographers, ſeems to have been miſled by the portrait of Cowley being by miſtake marked with the age of thirteen years. R.

"and

"and Thiſbe," written when he was ten years old; and "Conſtantia and Philetus," written two years after.

While he was yet at ſchool he produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though it was not publiſhed till he had been ſome time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the paſtoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and therefore the time at which it was compoſed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge*, where he continued his ſtudies with great intenſeneſs; for he is ſaid to have written, while he was yet a young ſtudent, the greater part of his "Davideis;" a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the ſtudy of many years, but by a mind of the greateſt vigour and activity.

Two years after his ſettlement at Cambridge he publiſhed "Love's Riddle," with

* He was a candidate this year at Weſtminſter ſchool for election to Trinity College, but proved unſucceſsful. N.

a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby; of whoſe acquaintance all his contemporaries ſeem to have been ambitious; and "Naufragium Joculare," a comedy written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models; for it is not looſe verſe, but mere proſe. It was printed, with a dedication in verſe to Dr. Comber, maſter of the college; but having neither the facility of a popular nor the accuracy of a learned work, it ſeems to be now univerſally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince paſſed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with a repreſentation of the "Guardian," a comedy, which Cowley ſays was neither written nor acted, but rough-drawn by him, and repeated by the ſcholars. That this comedy was printed during his abſence from his country, he appears to have conſidered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the ſuppreſſion of the theatres, it was ſometimes privately acted with ſufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now maſter of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from

from Cambridge, and ſheltered himſelf at St. John's College in Oxford; where, as is ſaid by Wood, he publiſhed a ſatire, called "The "Puritan and Papiſt," which was only inſerted in the laſt collection of his works*; and ſo diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the warmth of his loyalty, and the elegance of his converſation, that he gained the kindneſs and confidence of thoſe who attended the King, and amongſt others of Lord Falkland, whoſe notice caſt a luſtre on all to whom it was extended.

About the time when Oxford was ſurrendered to the parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became ſecretary to the Lord Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, and was employed in ſuch correſpondence as the royal cauſe required, and particularly in cyphering and decyphering the letters that paſſed between the King and Queen; an employment of the higheſt confidence and honour. So wide was his pro-

* In the firſt edition of this Life, Dr. Johnſon wrote, "which was never inſerted in any collection of his "works;" but he altered the expreſſion when the Lives were collected into volumes. The ſatire was added to Cowley's works by the deſire of Johnſon. N.

vince of intelligence, that, for ſeveral years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his "Miſtreſs" was publiſhed; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a ſubſequent edition, that "poets are ſcarcely thought freemen of their "company without paying ſome duties, or "obliging themſelves to be true to Love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the baſis of all excellence is truth: he that profeſſes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtleſs deſerved his tenderneſs. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes*, who had means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in

* Barneſii Anacreontem. Dr. J.

reality

reality was in love but once, and then never had reſolution to tell his paſſion.

This conſideration cannot but abate, in ſome meaſure, the reader's eſteem for the work and the author. To love excellence, is natural; it is natural likewiſe for the lover to ſolicit reciprocal regard by an elaborate diſplay of his own qualifications. The deſire of pleaſing has in different men produced actions of heroiſm, and effuſions of wit; but it ſeems as reaſonable to appear the champion as the poet of an "airy nothing," and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his maſter Pindar to call the "dream of a ſhadow."

It is ſurely not difficult, in the ſolitude of a college, or in the buſtle of the world, to find uſeful ſtudies and ſerious employment. No man needs to be ſo burthened with life as to ſquander it in voluntary dreams of fictitious occurrences. The man that ſits down to ſuppoſe himſelf charged with treaſon or peculation, and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he

was

was never within the poſſibility of committing, differs only by the infrequency of his folly from him who praiſes beauty which he never ſaw; complains of jealouſy which he never felt; ſuppoſes himſelf ſometimes invited, and ſometimes forſaken; fatigues his fancy, and ranſacks his memory, for images which may exhibit the gaiety of hope, or the gloomineſs of deſpair; and dreſſes his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis ſometimes in flowers fading as her beauty, and ſometimes in gems laſting as her virtues.

At Paris, as ſecretary to lord Jermyn, he was engaged in tranſacting things of real importance with real men and real women, and at that time did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards Earl of Arlington, from April to December in 1650, are preſerved in "Miſcellanea Aulica," a collection of papers publiſhed by Brown. Theſe letters, being written like thoſe of other men whoſe minds are more on things than words, contribute no otherwiſe to his reputation than as they ſhew him to have been above the affectation of unſeaſonable ele-

elegance, and to have known that the buſineſs of a ſtateſman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetorick.

One paſſage, however, ſeems not unworthy of ſome notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty then in agitation:

"The Scotch treaty," ſays he, "is the "only thing now in which we are vitally con- "cerned; I am one of the laſt hopers, and "yet cannot now abſtain from believing, that "an agreement will be made: all people upon "the place incline to that of union. The "Scotch will moderate ſomething of the ri- "gour of their demands; the mutual ne- "ceſſity of an accord is viſible, the King is "perſuaded of it. And to tell you the truth "(which I take to be an argument above all "the reſt), Virgil has told the ſame thing to "that purpoſe."

This expreſſion from a ſecretary of the preſent time, would be conſidered as merely ludicrous, or at moſt as an oſtentatious diſplay of ſcholarſhip; but the manners of that time were ſo tinged with ſuperſtition, that

I cannot but ſuſpect Cowley of having conſulted on this great occaſion the Virgilian lots *, and to have given ſome credit to the anſwer of his oracle.

Some

* Conſulting the Virgilian Lots, Sortes Virgilianæ, is a method of Divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumſtances of the peruſer the firſt paſſage in either of the two pages that he accidently fixes his eye on. It is ſaid, that king Charles I. and lord Falkland, being in the Bodleian library, made this experiment of their future fortunes, and met with paſſages equally ominous to each. That of the king was the following:

At bello audacis populi vexatus & armis,
Finibus extorris, complexu avulſus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna ſuorum
Funera, nec, cum ſe ſub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena.

Æneid, book IV. line 615.

Yet let a race untam'd, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppoſe,
Oppreſs'd with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men diſcourag'd, and himſelf expell'd:
Let him for ſuccour ſue from place to place,
Torn from his ſubjects and his ſon's embrace.
Firſt let him ſee his friends in battle ſlain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain:
And when, at length, the cruel war ſhall ceaſe,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace;

Some years afterwards, "buſineſs," ſays Sprat, "paſſed of courſe into other hands;"

> Nor let him then enjoy ſupreme command,
> But fall untimely by ſome hoſtile hand,
> And lie unbury'd on the barren ſand.
>
> DRYDEN.

Lord FALKLAND's:

> Non hæc, O Palla, dederas promiſſa parenti,
> Cautius ut ſævo velles te credere Marti.
> Haud ignarus eram, quantum nova gloria in armis,
> Et prædulce decus primo certamine poſſet.
> Primitiæ juvenis miſeræ, bellique propinqui
> Dura rudimenta, & nulli exaudita Deorum,
> Vota preceſque meæ!
>
> Æneid, book XI. line 152.

> O Pallas, thou haſt fail'd thy plighted word,
> To fight with caution, not to tempt the ſword;
> I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I knew
> What perils youthful ardour would purſue;
> That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
> Young as thou wert to dangers raw, to war.
> O curſt eſſay of arms, diſaſtrous doom,
> Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come;
> Hard elements of unauſpicious war,
> Vain vows to Heaven, and unavailing care.
>
> DRYDEN.

Hoffman, in his Lexicon, gives a very ſatisfactory account of this practice of ſeeking fates in books: and ſays, that it was uſed by the Pagans, the Jewiſh Rabbins, and even the early Chriſtians; the latter taking the New Teſtament for their oracle. H.

and

and Cowley, being no longer uſeful at Paris, was in 1656 ſent back into England, that, "under pretence of privacy and retirement, "he might take occaſion of giving notice of "the poſture of things in this nation."

Soon after his return to London, he was ſeized by ſome meſſengers of the uſurping powers, who were ſent out in queſt of another man; and being examined, was put into confinement, from which he was not diſmiſſed without the ſecurity of a thouſand pounds given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he publiſhed his poems, with a preface, in which he ſeems to have inſerted ſomething, ſuppreſſed in ſubſequent editions, which was interpreted to denote ſome relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, that "his deſire had been for ſome "days paſt, and did ſtill very vehemently "continue, to retire himſelf to ſome of the "American plantations, and to forſake this "world for ever."

From the obloquy which the appearance of ſubmiſſion to the uſurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him,

him, and indeed it does not ſeem to have leſſened his reputation. His wiſh for retirement we can eaſily believe to be undiſſembled; a man harraſſed in one kingdom, and perſecuted in another, who, after a courſe of buſineſs that employed all his days and half his nights in cyphering and decyphering, comes to his own country and ſteps into a priſon, will be willing enough to retire to ſome place of quiet and of ſafety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a ſufferer, diſpoſe us to forget that, if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice.

He then took upon himſelf the character of Phyſician, ſtill, according to Sprat, with intention, "to diſſemble the main deſign of "his coming over;" and, as Mr. Wood relates, "complying with the men then in "power (which was much taken notice of "by the royal party), he obtained an order "to be created Doctor of Phyſick, which "being done to his mind (whereby he gained "the ill-will of ſome of his friends), he "went into France again, having made a "copy of verſes on Oliver's death."

This

This is no favourable repreſentation, yet even in this not much wrong can be diſcovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be enquired before he can be blamed. It is not ſaid that he told them any ſecrets, or aſſiſted them by intelligence, or any other act. If he only promiſed to be quiet, that they in whoſe hands he was might free him from confinement, he did what no law of ſociety prohibits.

The man whoſe miſcarriage in a juſt cauſe has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preſerve his life, by a promiſe of neutrality: for the ſtipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before; the neutrality of a captive may be always ſecured by his impriſonment or death. He that is at the diſpoſal of another, may not promiſe to aid him in any injurious act, becauſe no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There is reaſon to think that Cowley promiſed little. It does not appear that his com-

compliance gained him confidence enough to be truſted without ſecurity, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himſelf ſecure, for at that diſſolution of government, which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he reſumed his former ſtation, and ſtaid till the Reſtoration.

"He continued," ſays his biographer, "under theſe bonds till the general deliver-"ance;" it is therefore to be ſuppoſed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the King without the conſent of his bondſman; that he did not ſhew his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permiſſion.

Of the verſes on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative ſeems to imply ſomething encomiaſtick, there has been no appearance. There is a diſcourſe concerning his government, indeed, with verſes intermixed, but ſuch as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of uſurpation.

A doctor of phyſick however he was made at Oxford, in December, 1657; and in the

commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been given by Dr. Birch, he appears buſy among the experimental philoſophers with the title of Dr. Cowley.

There is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he ever attempted practice; but his preparatory ſtudies have contributed ſomething to the honour of his country. Conſidering Botany as neceſſary to a phyſician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance of a favourite ſtudy affects all ſubordinate operations of the intellect, Botany in the mind of Cowley turned into Poetry. He compoſed in Latin ſeveral books on Plants, of which the firſt and ſecond diſplay the qualities of Herbs, in elegiac verſe; the third and fourth, the beauties of Flowers in various meaſures; and in the fifth and ſixth, the uſes of trees in heroick numbers.

At the ſame time were produced, from the ſame univerſity, the two great Poets, Cowley and Milton, of diſſimilar genius, of oppoſite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin Poetry, in which the Engliſh, till their

their works and May's poem appeared*, ſeemed unable to conteſt the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton be compared (for May I hold to be ſuperior to both), the advantage ſeems to lie on the ſide of Cowley. Milton is generally content to expreſs the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loſs of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the Reſtoration, after all the diligence of his long ſervice, and with conſciouſneſs not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and, that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a Song of Triumph. But this was a

* By May's Poem, we are here to underſtand a continuation of Lucan's Pharſalia to the death of Julius Cæſar, by Thomas May, an eminent poet and hiſtorian, who flouriſhed in the reigns of James and Charles I, and of whom a life is given in the Biographia Britannica. H.

time of ſuch general hope, that great numbers were inevitably diſappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediouſly delayed. He had been promiſed, by both Charles the Firſt and Second, the Maſterſhip of the Savoy; "but he loſt it," ſays Wood, "by certain "perſons, enemies to the Muſes."

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having, by ſuch alteration as he thought proper, fitted his old Comedy of the "Guardian" for the ſtage, he produced it* under the title of "The Cutter of Cole-"man-ſtreet †." It was treated on the ſtage with great ſeverity, and was afterwards cenſured as a ſatire on the king's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the firſt exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis, "that, when they told Cowley how little

* 1663.

† Here is an error in the deſignation of this comedy, which our author copied from the title-page of the latter editions of Cowley's works: the title of the play itſelf is without the article, "Cutter of Coleman-ſtreet," and that, becauſe a merry ſharking fellow about the town, named Cutter, is a principal character in it. H.

"favour

"favour had been ſhewn him, he received "the news of his ill ſucceſs, not with ſo "much firmneſs as might have been expected "from ſo great a man."

What firmneſs they expected, or what weakneſs Cowley diſcovered, cannot be known. He that miſſes his end will never be as much pleaſed as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himſelf; and when the end is to pleaſe the multitude, no man, perhaps, has a right, in things admitting of gradation and compariſon, to throw the whole blame upon his judges, and totally to exclude diffidence and ſhame by a haughty conſciouſneſs of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play, it is difficult now to find the reaſon: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merriment. From the charge of diſaffection he exculpates himſelf in his preface, by obſerving how unlikely it is that, having followed the royal family through all their diſtreſſes, "he ſhould chuſe "the time of their reſtoration to begin a "quarrel with them." It appears, however,

from the Theatrical Regiſter of Downes the Prompter, to have been popularly conſidered as a ſatire on the royaliſts.

That he might ſhorten this tedious ſuſpenſe; he publiſhed his pretenſions and his diſcontent, in an ode called "The Complaint;" in which he ſtyles himſelf the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the uſual fortune of complaints, and ſeems to have excited more contempt than pity.

Theſe unlucky incidents are brought, maliciouſly enough, together in ſome ſtanzas, written about that time, on the choice of a laureat; a mode of ſatire, by which, ſince it was firſt introduced by Suckling, perhaps every generation of poets has been teazed.

Savoy miſſing Cowley came into the court,
Making apologies for his bad play;
Every one gave him ſo good a report,
That Apollo gave heed to all he could ſay:
Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
Unleſs he had done ſome notable folly;
Writ verſes unjuſtly in praiſe of Sam Tuke,
Or printed his pitiful Melancholy.

His

His vehement deſire of retirement now came again upon him. "Not finding," ſays the moroſe Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which he expected, while "others for their money carried away moſt "places, he retired diſcontented into Surrey."

"He was now," ſays the courtly Sprat, "weary of the vexations and formalities of "an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long compliance to foreign "manners. He was ſatiated with the arts "of a court; which ſort of life, though his "virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing "could make it quiet. Thoſe were the reaſons that made him to follow the violent "inclination of his own mind, which, in "the greateſt throng of his former buſineſs, "had ſtill called upon him, and repreſented "to him the true delights of ſolitary ſtudies, "of temperate pleaſures, and a moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of "fortune."

So differently are things ſeen! and ſo differently are they ſhewn! but actions are viſible, though motives are ſecret. Cowley cer-

tainly retired; firſt to Barn-elms, and afterwards to Chertſey, in Surrey. He ſeems, however, to have loſt part of his dread of the **hum of men.* He thought himſelf now ſafe enough from intruſion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and inſtead of ſeeking ſhelter in America, wiſely went only ſo far from the buſtle of life as that he might eaſily find his way back, when ſolitude ſhould grow tedious. His retreat was at firſt but ſlenderly accommodated; yet he ſoon obtained, by the intereſt of the earl of St. Alban's and the duke of Buckingham, ſuch a leaſe of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income.

By the lover of virtue and of wit it will be ſolicitouſly aſked, if he now was happy. Let them peruſe one of his letters accidentally preſerved by Peck, which I recommend to the conſideration of all that may hereafter pant for ſolitude.

* L'Allegro of Milton. Dr. J.

"To

"To Dr. THOMAS SPRAT.

"Chertſey, 21 May, 1665.

"The firſt night that I came hither I "caught ſo great a cold, with a defluxion of "rheum, as made me keep my chamber ten "days. And, two after, had ſuch a bruiſe "on my ribs with a fall, that I am yet un-"able to move or turn myſelf in my bed. "This is my perſonal fortune here to begin "with. And, beſides, I can get no money "from my tenants, and have my meadows "eaten up every night by cattle put in by "my neighbours. What this ſignifies, or "may come to in time, God knows; if it "be ominous, it can end in nothing leſs than "hanging. Another misfortune has been, "and ſtranger than all the reſt, that you "have broke your word with me, and failed "to come, even though you told Mr. Bois "that you would. This is what they call "*Monſtri ſimile.* I do hope to recover my "late hurt ſo farre within five or ſix days "(though it be uncertain yet whether I ſhall "ever recover it) as to walk about again. "And then, methinks, you and I and *the*

"*Dean* might be very merry upon S. Anne's "Hill. You might very conveniently come "hither the way of Hampton Town, lying "there one night. I write this in pain, and "can ſay no more: *Verbum ſapienti.*"

He did not long enjoy the pleaſure or ſuffer the uneaſineſs of ſolitude; for he died at the Porch-houſe * in Chertſey in 1667, in the 49th year of his age.

He was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenſer; and king Charles pronounced, "That Mr. Cowley had not left "behind him a better man in England." He is repreſented by Dr. Sprat as the moſt amiable of mankind; and this poſthumous praiſe may ſafely be credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet recent, and the minds of either party were eaſily irritated, was obliged

* Now in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Clarke, Alderman of London. Dr. J.

to

to paſs over many tranſactions in general expreſſions, and to leave curioſity often unſatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot however now be known. I muſt therefore recommend the peruſal of his work, to which my narration can be conſidered only as a ſlender ſupplement.

COWLEY, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, inſtead of tracing intellectual pleaſures in the minds of man, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praiſed, and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things ſubject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and faſhions, and at different times takes different forms. About the beginning of the ſeventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphyſical poets; of whom, in a criticiſm on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give ſome account.

The

The metaphyſical poets were men of learning, and to ſhew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily reſolving to ſhew it in rhyme, inſtead of writing poetry they only wrote verſes, and very often ſuch verſes as ſtood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was ſo imperfect, that they were only found to be verſes by counting the ſyllables.

If the father of criticiſm has rightly denominated poetry τέχνη μιμητικὴ, *an imitative art*, theſe writers will, without great wrong, loſe their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be ſaid to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature for life; neither painted the forms of matter; nor repreſented the operations of intellect.

Thoſe however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confeſſes of himſelf and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit; but maintains, that they ſurpaſs him in poetry.

If Wit be well deſcribed by Pope, as being "that which has been often thought, "but

"but was never before ſo well expreſſed," they certainly never attained, nor ever ſought it; for they endeavoured to be ſingular in their thoughts, and were careleſs of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depreſſes it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from ſtrength of thought to happineſs of language.

If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be conſidered as Wit which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its firſt production, acknowledged to be juſt; if it be that which he that never found it wonders how he miſſed; to wit of this kind the metaphyſical poets have ſeldom riſen. Their thoughts are often new, but ſeldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they juſt; and the reader, far from wondering that he miſſed them, wonders more frequently by what perverſeneſs of induſtry they were ever found.

But Wit, abſtracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorouſly and philoſophically conſidered as a kind of *diſcordia concors*; a combination of diſſimilar images, or

or diſcovery of occult reſemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The moſt heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ranſacked for illuſtrations, compariſons, and alluſions; their learning inſtructs, and their ſubtility ſurpriſes; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he ſometimes admires, is ſeldom pleaſed.

From this account of their compoſitions it will be readily inferred, that they were not ſucceſsful in repreſenting or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on ſomething unexpected and ſurpriſing, they had no regard to that uniformity of ſentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleaſure of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occaſion, they ſhould have ſaid or done; but wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil, impaſſive and at leiſure; as Epicurean deities, making remarks on the actions of men, and the viciſſitudes of life, without intereſt and without emotion. Their courtſhip was void of

of fondneſs, and their lamentation of ſorrow. Their wiſh was only to ſay what they hoped had been never ſaid before.

Nor was the ſublime more within their reach than the pathetick; for they never attempted that comprehenſion and expanſe of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the firſt effect is ſudden aſtoniſhment, and the ſecond rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleneſs by diſperſion. Great thoughts are always general, and conſiſt in poſitions not limited by exceptions, and in deſcriptions not deſcending to minuteneſs. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its metaphorical meaning for nicety of diſtinction. Thoſe writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatneſs; for great things cannot have eſcaped former obſervation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more repreſent, by their ſlender conceits and laboured particularities, the proſpects of nature, or the ſcenes of life, than he, who diſſects a ſun-beam with

with a priſm, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a ſummer noon.

What they wanted however of the ſublime, they endeavoured to ſupply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reaſon but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confuſed magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly loſt; if they frequently threw away their wit upon falſe conceits, they likewiſe ſometimes ſtruck out unexpected truth: if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at laſt neceſſary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphyſical poet, nor aſſume the dignity of a writer, by deſcriptions copied from deſcriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary ſimilies, by readineſs of rhyme, and volubility of ſyllables.

In

In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollection or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflexion and comparison are employed; and in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found buried perhaps in grossness of expression, but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety though less copiousness of sentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marino and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of a very extensive and various knowledge; and by Jonson, whose manner resembled that of Donne more in the ruggedness of his lines than in the cast of his sentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had undoubtedly more imitators than time has left behind. Their immediate ſucceſſors, of whom any remembrance can be ſaid to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleiveland, and Milton. Denham and Waller ſought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphyſick ſtyle only in his lines upon Hobſon the Carrier. Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predeceſſors, having as much ſentiment and more muſick. Suckling neither improved verſification, nor abounded in conceits. The faſhionable ſtyle remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton diſdained it.

CRITICAL REMARKS are not eaſily underſtood without examples; and I have therefore collected inſtances of the modes of writing by which this ſpecies of poets, for poets they were called by themſelves and their admirers, was eminently diſtinguiſhed.

AS the authors of this race were perhaps more deſirous of being admired than underſtood,

ſtood, they ſometimes drew their conceits from receſſes of learning not very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley on *Knowledge:*

The ſacred tree midſt the fair orchard grew;
The phœnix Truth did on it reſt,
And built his perfum'd neſt,
That right Porphyrian tree which did true logic ſhew.
Each leaf did learned notions give,
And th' apples were demonſtrative:
So clear their colour and divine,
The very ſhade they caſt did other lights outſhine.

On Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age:

Love was with thy life entwin'd,
Cloſe as heat with fire is join'd,
A powerful brand preſcrib'd the date
Of thine, like Meleager's fate.
Th' antiperiſtaſis of age
More enflam'd thy amorous rage.

In the following verſes we have an alluſion to a Rabbinical opinion concerning Manna:

Variety I aſk not: give me one
To live perpetually upon.

The Perſon Love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taſte of all in it.

Thus *Donne* ſhews his medicinal knowledge in ſome encomiaſtick verſes:

In every thing there naturally grows
A Balſamum to keep it freſh and new,
If 'twere not injur'd by extrinſique blows;
Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.
But you, of learning and religion,
And virtue and ſuch ingredients, have made
A mithridate, whoſe operation
Keeps off, or cures what can be done or ſaid.

Though the following lines of Donne, on the laſt night of the year, have ſomething in them too ſcholaſtic, they are not inelegant:

This twilight of two years, not paſt nor next,
Some emblem is of me, or I of this,
Who, meteor-like, of ſtuff and form perplext,
Whoſe what and where in diſputation is,
If I ſhould call me any thing, ſhould miſs.
I ſum the years and me, and find me not
Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new,
That cannot ſay, my thanks I have forgot,
Nor truſt I this with hopes; and yet ſcarce true
This bravery is, ſince theſe times ſhew'd me you.

DONNE.

Yet

Yet more abſtruſe and profound is *Donne's* reflection upon Man as a Microcoſm:

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Something to anſwer in ſome proportion
All the world's riches: and in good men, this
Virtue, our form's form, and our ſoul's ſoul is.

OF thoughts ſo far fetched, as to be not only unexpected, but unnatural, all their books are full.

To a Lady, who wrote poeſies for rings.

They, who above do various circles find,
Say, like a ring th'æquator heaven does bind.
When heaven ſhall be adorn'd by thee,
(Which then more heaven than 'tis, will be)
'Tis thou muſt write the poeſy there,
For it wanteth one as yet,
Then the ſun paſs through't twice a year,
The ſun, which is eſteem'd the god of wit.

COWLEY.

The difficulties which have been raiſed about identity in philoſophy, are by Cowley with ſtill more perplexity applied to Love:

Five years ago (ſays ſtory) I lov'd you,
For which you call me moſt inconſtant now;
Pardon me, madam, you miſtake the man;
For I am not the ſame that I was then;
No fleſh is now the ſame 'twas then in me,
And that my mind is chang'd yourſelf may ſee.
The ſame thoughts to retain ſtill, and intents,
Were more inconſtant far: for accidents
Muſt of all things moſt ſtrangely inconſtant prove,
If from one ſubject they t' another move:
My members then, the father members were
From whence theſe take their birth, which now
are here.
If then this body love what th' other did,
'Twere inceſt, which by nature is forbid.

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry, compared to travels through different countries:

Haſt thou not found each woman's breaſt
(The land where thou haſt travelled)
Either by ſavages poſſeſt,
Or wild, and uninhabited?
What joy could'ſt take, or what repoſe,
In countries ſo uncivilis'd as thoſe?

Luſt,

Luſt, the ſcorching dog-ſtar, here
Rages with immoderate heat;
Whilſt Pride, the rugged Northern Bear,
In others makes the cold too great.
And where theſe are temperate known,
The ſoil's all barren ſand, or rocky ſtone.

COWLEY.

A Lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to Egypt:

The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below.

COWLEY.

The lover ſuppoſes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury and rites of ſacrifice:

And yet this death of mine, I fear,
Will ominous to her appear:
When found in every other part,
Her ſacrifice is found without an heart.
For the laſt tempeſt of my death
Shall ſigh out that too, with my breath.

That the chaos was harmoniſed, has been recited of old; but whence the different ſounds aroſe remained for a modern to diſcover:

Th' ungovern'd parts no correſpondence knew;
An artleſs war from thwarting motions grew;
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.
Water and air he for the Tenor choſe,
Earth made the Baſe; the Treble, flame aroſe.
COWLEY.

The tears of lovers are always of great poetical account; but Donne has extended them into worlds. If the lines are not eaſily underſtood, they may be read again:

On a round ball
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Aſia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.
So doth each tear,
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impreſſion grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow
This world, by waters ſent from thee my heaven diſſolved ſo.

On reading the following lines, the reader may perhaps cry out—*Confuſion worſe confounded.*

Here lies a ſhe ſun, and a he moon here,
She gives the beſt light to his ſphere,
Or each is both, and all, and ſo
They unto one another nothing owe.

DONNE.

Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a teleſcope?

Though God be our true glaſs through which we ſee
All, ſince the being of all things is he,
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive
Things in proportion fit, by perſpective
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,
Virtues, indeed remote, ſeem to be near.

Who would imagine it poſſible that in a very few lines ſo many remote ideas could be brought together?

Since 'tis my doom, Love's underſhrieve,
Why this reprieve?

Why

Why doth my ſhe advowſon fly
Incumbency?
To ſell thyſelf doſt thou intend
By candle's end,
And hold the contraſt thus in doubt,
Life's taper out?
Think but how ſoon the market fails,
Your ſex lives faſter than the males;
And if to meaſure age's ſpan,
The ſober Julian were th'account of man,
Whilſt you live by the fleet Gregorian.

CLEIVELAND.

OF enormous and diſguſting hyperboles, theſe may be examples:

By every wind that comes this way,
Send me at leaſt a ſigh or two,
Such and ſo many I'll repay
As ſhall themſelves make winds to get to you.

COWLEY.

In tears I'll waſte theſe eyes,
By Love ſo vainly fed;
So luſt of old the Deluge puniſhed.

COWLEY.

All arm'd in braſs the richeſt dreſs of war,
(A diſmal glorious fight) he ſhone afar.

The

The ſun himſelf ſtarted with ſudden fright,
To ſee his beams return ſo diſmal bright.

COWLEY.

An univerſal conſternation:

His bloody eyes he hurls round, his ſharp paws
Tear up the ground; then runs he wild about,
Laſhing his angry tail and roaring out.
Beaſts creep into their dens, and tremble there;
Trees, though no wind is ſtirring, ſhake with fear;
Silence and horror fill the place around;
Echo itſelf dares ſcarce repeat the ſound.

COWLEY.

THEIR fictions were often violent and unnatural.

Of his Miſtreſs bathing.

The fiſh around her crowded, as they do
To the falſe light that treacherous fiſhes ſhew,
And all with as much eaſe might taken be,
As ſhe at firſt took me:
For ne'er did light ſo clear
Among the waves appear,
Though every night the ſun himſelf ſet there.

COWLEY.

The

The poetical effect of a lover's name upon glaſs:

My name engrav'd herein
Doth contribute my firmneſs to this glaſs;
Which, ever ſince that charm, hath been
As hard as that which grav'd it was.

DONNE.

THEIR conceits were ſentiments flight and trifling.

On an inconſtant woman:

He enjoys the calmy ſunſhine now,
And no breath ſtirring hears,
In the clear heaven of thy brow,
No ſmalleſt cloud appears.
He ſees thee gentle, fair and gay,
And truſts the faithleſs April of thy May.

COWLEY.

Upon a paper written with the juice of lemon, and read by the fire:

Nothing yet in thee is ſeen,
But when a genial heat warms thee within,
A new-

A new-born wood of various lines there grows;
Here buds an L, and there a B,
Here ſpouts a V, and there a T,
And all the flouriſhing letters ſtand in rows.

COWLEY.

As they ſought only for novelty, they did not much enquire whether their alluſions were to things high or low, elegant or groſs; whether they compared the little to the great, or the great to the little.

Phyſick and Chirurgery for a Lover.

Gently, ah gently, madam, touch
The wound, which you yourſelf have made;
That pain muſt needs be very much,
Which makes me of your hand afraid.
Cordials of pity give me now,
For I too weak of purgings grow.

COWLEY.

The World and a Clock.

Mahol, th'inferior world's fantaſtic face,
Thro' all the turns of matter's maze did trace;
Great Nature's well-ſet clock in pieces took;
On all the ſprings and ſmalleſt wheels did look

Of

Of life and motion, and with equal art
Made up the whole again of every part.
COWLEY.

A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but that it may not want its due honour, Cleiveland has paralleled it with the Sun:

The moderate value of our guiltleſs ore
Makes no man atheiſt, and no woman whore;
Yet why ſhould hallow'd veſtal's ſacred ſhrine
Deſerve more honour than a flaming mine?
Theſe pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be,
Than a few embers, for a deity.
Had he our pits, the Perſian would admire
No ſun, but warm's devotion at our fire:
He'd leave the trotting whipſter, and prefer
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that waggoner.
For wants he heat, or light? or would have ſtore,
Or both? 'tis here: and what can ſuns give more?
Nay, what's the ſun but, in a different name,
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!
Then let this truth reciprocally run,
The ſun's heaven's coalery, and coals our ſun.

Death, a Voyage:

No family
E'er rigg'd a ſoul for heaven's diſcovery,
With

With whom more venturers might boldly dare
Venture their ſtakes, with him in joy to ſhare.
DONNE.

THEIR thoughts and expreſſions were ſometimes groſſly abſurd, and ſuch as no figures or licence can reconcile to the underſtanding.

A Lover neither dead nor alive:

Then down I laid my head
Down on cold earth; and for a while was dead,
And my freed ſoul to a ſtrange ſomewhere fled;
Ah, ſottiſh ſoul, ſaid I,
When back to its cage again I ſaw it fly;
Fool to reſume her broken chain!
And row her galley here again!
Fool, to that body to return
Where it condemn'd and deſtin'd is to burn!
Once dead, how can it be,
Death ſhould a thing ſo pleaſant ſeem to thee,
That thou ſhould'ſt come to live it o'er again
in me?

A Lover's heart, a hand grenado.

Wo to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,

'Twill

'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a grenado ſhot into a magazin.
Then ſhall Love keep the aſhes, and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts:
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' allay; from mine, the metal take.

COWLEY.

The poetical Propagation of Light:

The prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,
From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall;
Then from thoſe wombs of ſtars, the Bride's bright eyes,
At every glance a conſtellation flies
And ſowes the court with ſtars, and doth prevent
In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament:
Firſt her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels luſtres riſe;
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good deſire.

DONNE.

THEY were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of dreſs, and therefore miſs the notice and the praiſe which are often gained by thoſe, who think leſs, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.

That

That a Miſtreſs beloved is fairer in idea than in reality, is by Cowley thus expreſſed:

Thou in my fancy doſt much higher ſtand,
Than women can be plac'd by Nature's hand;
And I muſt needs, I'm ſure, a loſer be,
To change thee, as thou'rt there, for very thee.

That prayer and labour ſhould co-operate, are thus taught by Donne:

In none but us are ſuch mixt engines found,
As hands of double office; for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raiſe;
Who prayerleſs labours, or, without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's none.

By the ſame author, a common topick, the danger of procraſtination, is thus illuſtrated,

—— That which I ſhould have begun
In my youth's morning, now late muſt be done;
And I, as giddy travellers muſt do,
Which ſtray or ſleep all day, and having loſt
Light and ſtrength, dark and tir'd, muſt then
ride poſt.

All that man has to do is to live and die; the ſum of humanity is comprehended by Donne in the following lines:

Think in how poor a priſon thou didſt lie;
After enabled but to ſuck and cry.
Think, when 'twas grown to moſt, 'twas a poor inn,
A province pack'd up in two yards of ſkin,
And that uſurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage
Of ſickneſſes, or their true mother, age.
But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;
Thou haſt thy expanſion now, and liberty;
Think, that a ruſty piece diſcharg'd is flown
In pieces, and the bullet is his own,
And freely flies: this to thy ſoul allow, [now.
Think thy ſhell broke, think thy ſoul hatch'd but

THEY were ſometimes indelicate and diſguſting. Cowley thus apoſtrophiſes beauty:

——— Thou tyrant, which leav'ſt no man free!
Thou ſubtle thief, from whom nought ſafe can be!
Thou murtherer, which haſt kill'd, and devil, which would'ſt damn me!

Thus

Thus he addreſſes his Miſtreſs:

Thou who, in many a propriety,
So truly art the ſun to me,
Add one more likeneſs, which I'm ſure you can,
And let me and my ſun beget a man.

Thus he repreſents the meditations of a Lover:

Though in thy thoughts ſcarce any tracts have been
So much as of original ſin,
Such charms thy beauty wears as might
Deſires in dying confeſt ſaints excite.
Thou with ſtrange adultery
Doſt in each breaſt a brothel keep;
Awake, all men do luſt for thee,
And ſome enjoy thee when they ſleep.

The true taſte of Tears.

Hither with cryſtal vials, lovers, come,
And take my tears, which are love's wine,
And try your miſtreſs' tears at home;
For all are falſe, that taſte not juſt like mine.

DONNE.

This is yet more indelicate:

As the ſweet ſweat of roſes in a ſtill,
As that which from chaf'd muſk-cat's pores doth trill,
As the almighty balm of th' early Eaſt;
Such are the ſweet drops of my miſtreſs' breaſt.
And on her neck her ſkin ſuch luſtre ſets,
They ſeem no ſweat drops, but pearl coronets:
Rank, ſweaty froth thy miſtreſs' brow defiles.

DONNE.

THEIR expreſſions ſometime raiſe horror, when they intend perhaps to be pathetic:

As men in hell are from diſeaſes free,
So from all other ills am I,
Free from their known formality:
But all pains eminently lie in thee.

COWLEY.

THEY were not always ſtrictly curious, whether the opinions from which they drew their illuſtrations were true; it was enough that they were popular. Bacon remarks, that ſome falſehoods are continued by tradition, becauſe they ſupply commodious alluſions.

It

It gave a piteous groan, and ſo it broke:
In vain it ſomething would have ſpoke:
The love within too ſtrong for't was,
Like poiſon put into a Venice-glaſs.

COWLEY.

IN forming deſcriptions, they looked out not for images, but for conceits. Night has been a common ſubject, which poets have contended to adorn. Dryden's Night is well known; Donne's is as follows:

Thou ſeeſt me here at midnight, now all reſt:
Time's dead low-water; when all minds diveſt
To-morrow's buſineſs, when the labourers have
Such reſt in bed, that their laſt church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will ſcarce be a type of this,
Now when the client, whoſe laſt hearing is
To-morrow, ſleeps; when the condemned man,
Who, when he opes his eyes, muſt ſhut them then
Again by death, although ſad watch he keep,
Doth practiſe dying by a little ſleep,
Thou at this midnight ſeeſt me.

IT muſt be however confeſſed of theſe writers, that if they are upon common ſubjects often unneceſſarily and unpoetically ſubtle; yet where ſcholaſtick ſpeculation can be

properly admitted, their copiouſneſs and acuteneſs may juſtly be admired. What Cowley has written upon Hope ſhews an unequalled fertility of invention:

Hope, whoſe weak being ruin'd is,
Alike if it ſucceed, and if it miſs;
Whom good or ill does equally confound,
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound;
Vain ſhadow! which doſt vanquiſh quite,
Both at full noon and perfect night!
The ſtars have not a poſſibility
Of bleſſing thee;
If things then from their end we happy call,
'Tis Hope is the moſt hopeleſs thing of all.
Hope, thou bold taſter of delight,
Who, whilſt thou ſhould'ſt but taſte, devour'ſt it quite!
Thou bring'ſt us an eſtate, yet leav'ſt us poor,
By clogging it with legacies before!
The joys which we entire ſhould wed,
Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;
Good fortunes without gain imported be,
Such mighty cuſtom's paid to thee:
For joy, like wine kept cloſe, does better taſte;
If it take air before its ſpirits waſte.

To the following compariſon of a man that travels, and his wife that ſtays at home, with a pair of compaſſes, it may be doubted whe-

whether abſurdity or ingenuity has the better claim;

Our two ſouls therefore, which are one,
Though I muſt go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expanſion,
Like gold to airy thinneſs beat.
If they be two, they are two ſo
As ſtiff twin-compaſſes are two;
Thy ſoul the fixt foot, makes no ſhow
To move, but doth, if th' other do.
And though it in the centre ſit,
Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who muſt
Like th' other foot obliquely run.
Thy firmneſs makes my circle juſt,
And makes me end, where I begun.

DONNE.

In all theſe examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious, is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in purſuit of ſomething new and ſtrange; and that the writers fail to give delight, by their deſire of exciting admiration.

HAVING thus endeavoured to exhibit a general repreſentation of the ſtyle and ſentiments of the metaphyſical poets, it is now proper to examine particularly the works of Cowley, who was almoſt the laſt of that race, and undoubtedly the beſt.

His Miſcellanies contain a collection of ſhort compoſitions, written ſome as they were dictated by a mind at leiſure, and ſome as they were called forth by different occaſions; with great variety of ſtyle and ſentiment, from burleſque levity to awful grandeur. Such an aſſemblage of diverſified excellence no other poet has hitherto afforded. To chooſe the beſt, among many good, is one of the moſt hazardous attempts of criticiſm. I know not whether Scaliger himſelf has perſuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the two favourite odes, which he eſtimates in his raptures at the value of a kingdom. I will however venture to recommend Cowley's firſt piece, which ought to be inſcribed *To my Muſe*, for want of which the ſecond couplet is without reference.

When

When the title is added, there will ſtill remain a defect; for every piece ought to contain in itſelf whatever is neceſſary to make it intelligible. Pope has ſome epitaphs without names; which are therefore epitaphs to be lett, occupied indeed for the preſent, but hardly appropriated.

The ode on Wit is almoſt without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley that *Wit*, which had been till then uſed for *Intellection*, in contradiſtinction to *Will*, took the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

Of all the paſſages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none will eaſily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condemns exuberance of Wit;

Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
That ſhews more coſt than art.
Jewels at noſe and lips but ill appear;
Rather than all things wit, let none be there.
Several lights will not be ſeen,
If there be nothing elſe between.
Men doubt, becauſe they ſtand ſo thick i'th ſky,
If thoſe be ſtars which paint the galaxy.

In his verſes to Lord Falkland, whom every man of his time was proud to praiſe, there are, as there muſt be in all Cowley's compoſitions, ſome ſtriking thoughts, but they are not well wrought. His elegy on Sir Henry Wotton is vigorous and happy, the ſeries of thoughts is eaſy and natural, and the concluſion, though a little weakened by the intruſion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this Elegy, and in moſt of his encomiaſtic poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Harvey, there is much praiſe, but little paſſion, a very juſt and ample delineation of ſuch virtues as a ſtudious privacy admits, and ſuch intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can diſplay. He knew how to diſtinguiſh, and how to commend the qualities of his companion; but when he wiſhes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himſelf, and diverts his ſorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would *crackle* in the *fire*.

fire. It is the odd fate of this thought to be worſe for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as therefore this property was not aſſigned it by chance, the mind muſt be thought ſufficiently at eaſe that could attend to ſuch minuteneſs of phyſiology. But the power of Cowley is not ſo much to move the affections, as to exerciſe the underſtanding.

The *Chronicle* is a compoſiton unrivalled and alone: ſuch gaiety of fancy, ſuch facility of expreſſion, ſuch varied ſimilitude, ſuch a ſucceſſion of images, and ſuch a dance of words, it is in vain to expect except from Cowley. His ſtrength always appears in his agility; his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elaſtic mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moraliſt, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To ſuch a performance Suckling could have brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have ſupplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The

The verſes to Davenant, which are vigorouſly begun, and happily concluded, contain ſome hints of criticiſm very juſtly conceived and happily expreſſed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been ſufficiently obſerved: the few deciſions and remarks which his prefaces and his notes on the Davideis ſupply, were at that time acceſſions to Engliſh literature, and ſhew ſuch ſkill as raiſes our wiſh for more examples.

The lines from Jerſey are a very curious and pleaſing ſpecimen of the familiar deſcending to the burleſque.

His two metrical diſquiſitions *for* and *againſt* Reaſon are no mean ſpecimens of metaphyſical poetry. The ſtanzas againſt knowledge produce little conviction. In thoſe which are intended to exalt the human faculties, Reaſon has its proper taſk aſſigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verſes *for* Reaſon is a paſſage which Bentley, in the only Engliſh verſes which he is known to have written

written, ſeems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

The holy Book like the eighth ſphere doth ſhine
With thouſand lights of truth divine,
So numberleſs the ſtars that to our eye
It makes all but one galaxy:
Yet Reaſon muſt aſſiſt too; for in ſeas
So vaſt and dangerous as theſe,
Our courſe by ſtars above we cannot know
Without the compaſs too below.

After this ſays Bentley *.

Who travels in religious jars,
Truth mix'd with error, ſhade with rays,
Like Whiſton wanting pyx or ſtars,
In ocean wide or ſinks or ſtrays.

Cowley ſeems to have had, what Milton is believed to have wanted, the ſkill to rate his own performances by their juſt value, and has therefore cloſed his Miſcellanies with the verſes upon Craſhaw, which apparently excel all that have gone before them, and in which there are beauties which common authors

* Dodſley's Collection of Poems, vol. V. R.

may

may juſtly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.

To the Miſcellanies ſucceed the *Anacreontiques*, or paraphraſtical tranſlations of ſome little poems, which paſs, however juſtly, under the name of Anacreon. Of thoſe ſongs dedicated to feſtivity and gaiety, in which even the morality is voluptuous, and which teach nothing but the enjoyment of the preſent day, he has given rather a pleaſing than a faithful repreſentation, having retained their ſpritelineſs, but loſt their ſimplicity. The Anacreon of Cowley, like the Homer of Pope, has admitted the decoration of ſome modern graces, by which he is undoubtedly more amiable to common readers, and perhaps, if they would honeſtly declare their own preceptions, to far the greater part of thoſe whom courteſy and ignorance are content to ſtyle the Learned.

Theſe little pieces will be found more finiſhed in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction ſhews nothing of the mould of time, and the ſentments are at no great diſtance from our preſent habitudes of

of thought. Real mirth muſt be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wiſe in very different modes; but they have always laughed the ſame way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the ſame; the dialogue of comedy, when it is tranſcribed from popular manners and real life, is read from age to age with equal pleaſure. The artifices of inverſion, by which the eſtabliſhed order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words or meanings of words are introduced, is practiſed, not by thoſe who talk to be underſtood, but by thoſe who write to be admired.

The Anacreontiques therefore of Cowley give now all the pleaſure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power ſeems to have been greateſt in the familiar and the feſtive.

The next claſs of his poems is called *The Miſtreſs*, of which it is not neceſſary to ſelect any

any particular pieces for praiſe or cenſure. They have all the ſame beauties and faults, and nearly in the ſame proportion. They are written with exuberance of wit, and with copiouſneſs of learning; and it is truly aſſerted by Sprat, that the plenitude of the writer's knowledge flows in upon his page, ſo that the reader is commonly ſurpriſed into ſome improvement. But, conſidered as the verſes of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much commend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry nor fondneſs. His praiſes are too far ſought, and too hyperbolical, either to expreſs love, or to excite it; every ſtanza is crowded with darts and flames, with wounds and death, with mingled ſouls, and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which *The Miſtreſs* is filled with conceits is very copiouſly diſplayed by Addiſon. Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, expreſſed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fire is ſaid of love, or figurative fire, the ſame word in the ſame ſentence retaining both ſignifications. Thus, "obſerving the cold re-
"gard of his miſtreſs's eyes, and at the ſame
"time

"time their power of producing love in him, "he considers them as burning-glasses made "of ice. Finding himself able to live in the "greatest extremities of love, he concludes "the torrid zone to be habitable. Upon the "dying of a tree, on which he had cut his "[illegible] he observes, that his flames had "burnt up and withered the tree."

These conceits Addison calls mixed wit; that is, wit which consists of thoughts true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other. Addison's representation is sufficiently indulgent. That confusion of images may entertain for a moment; but being unnatural, it soon grows wearisome. Cowley delighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but, not to mention the ancients, he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy. Thus Sannazaro:

Aspice quam variis distringar Lesbia curis!
Uror, & heu! nostro manat ab igne liquor;
Sum Nilus, sumque Etna simul; restringite [illegible]
[illegible] lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe flamma meas.

One of the severe theologians of that time censured him as having published *a book of profane and lascivious Verses.* From the charge of profaneness, the constant tenour of his life, which seems to have been eminently virtuous, and the general tendency of his opinions, which discover no irreverence of religion, must defend him; but that the accusation of lasciviousness is unjust, the perusal of his works will sufficiently evince.

Cowley's *Mistress* has no power of seduction: "she plays round the head, but reaches "not the heart." Her beauty and absence, her kindness and cruelty, her disdain and inconstancy, produce no correspondence of emotion. His poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not perused with more sluggish frigidity. The compositions are such as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymer who had only heard of another sex; for they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his task, we sometimes esteem as learned, and sometimes despise

ſpiſe as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindarique Odes are now to be conſidered; a ſpecies of compoſition, which Cowley thinks Pancirolus might have counted *in his lift of the loſt inventions of antiquity*, and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover.

The purpoſe with which he has paraphraſed an Olympick and Nemæan Ode, is by himſelf ſufficiently explained. His endeavour was not to ſhew *preciſely what Pindar ſpoke, but his manner of ſpeaking*. He was therefore not at all reſtrained to his expreſſions, nor much to his ſentiments; nothing was required of him, but not to write as Pindar would not have written.

Of the Olympick Ode the beginning is, I think, above the original in elegance, and the concluſion below it in ſtrength. The connection is ſupplied with great perſpicuity, and all thoughts, which to a reader of leſs skill ſeem thrown together by chance, are concatenated without any abruption. Though

the Engliſh ode cannot be called a tranſlation, it may be very properly conſulted as a commentary.

The ſpirit of Pindar is indeed not every where equally preſerved. The following pretty lines are not ſuch as his *deep mouth* was uſed to pour:

Great Rhea's ſon,
If in Olympus' top where thou
Sitt'ſt to behold thy ſacred ſhow,
If in Alpheus' ſilver flight,
If in my verſe thou take delight,
My verſe, great Rhea's ſon, which is
Lofty as that, and ſmooth as this.

In the Nemæan ode the reader muſt, in mere juſtice to Pindar, obſerve that whatever is ſaid of *the original new moon, her tender fore-head and her horns*, is ſuperadded by his paraphraſt, who has many other plays of words and fancy unſuitable to the original, as,

The table, free for every gueſt,
No doubt will thee admit,
And feaſt more upon thee, than thou on it.

He

He ſometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them. In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a ſingle word, and Cowley ſpends three lines in ſwearing by the *Caſtalian Stream.* We are told of Theron's bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming proſe:

But in this thankleſs world the giver
Is envied even by the receiver;
'Tis now the cheap and frugal faſhion
Rather to hide than own the obligation:
Nay, 'tis much worſe than ſo;
It now an artifice does grow
Wrongs and injuries to do,
Leſt men ſhould think we owe.

It is hard to conceive that a man of the firſt rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out ſuch minute morality in ſuch feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooſes his own ſubjects, he ſometimes riſes to dignity truly Pindarick; and, if ſome de-

ficiencies of language be forgiven, his ſtrains are ſuch as thoſe of the Theban Bard were to his contemporaries:

Begin the ſong, and ſtrike the living lyre:
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance,
And to my ſong with ſmooth and equal meaſure dance;
While the dance laſts, how long ever it be,
My muſick's voice ſhall bear it company;
Till all gentle notes be drown'd
In the laſt trumpet's dreadful ſound.

After ſuch enthuſiaſm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like theſe!

But ſtop, my Muſe—
Hold thy Pindaric Pegaſus cloſely in,
Which does to rage begin—
—'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horſe—
'Twill no unſkilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that ſits not ſure.

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphyſical race, is that of

of purſuing his thoughts to the laſt ramifications, by which he loſes the grandeur of generality; for of the greateſt things the parts are little; what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of deſcription is deſtroyed by a ſcrupulous enumeration, and the force of metaphors is loſt, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the ſecondary ſenſe, more upon that from which the illuſtration is drawn than that to which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the ode intituled *The Muſe*, who goes to *take the air* in an intellectual chariot, to which he harneſſes Fancy and Judgement, Wit and Eloquence, Memory and Invention: how he diſtinguiſhed Wit from Fancy, or how Memory could properly contribute to Motion, he has not explained: we are however content to ſuppoſe that he could have juſtified his own fiction, and wiſh to ſee the Mute begin her career; but there is yet more to be done.

Let the *poſtilion* Nature mount, and let
The *coachman* Art be ſet;
And let the airy *footman*, running all beſide,
Make a long row of goodly pride;
Figures, conceits, raptures, and ſentences,
In a well-worded dreſs,
And innocent loves, and pleaſant truths and
uſeful lies,
In all their gaudy *liveries*.

Every mind is now diſguſted with this cumber of magnificence; yet I cannot refuſe myſelf the four next lines:

Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,
And bid it to put on;
For long though cheerful is the way,
And life, alas! allows but one ill winter's day.

In the ſame ode, celebrating the power of the Muſe, he gives her preſcience, or, in poetical language, the foreſight of events hatching in futurity; but having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to ſhew us that he knows what an egg contains:

Thou

Thou into the close nests of Time doſt peep,
And there with piercing eye
Through the firm ſhell and the thick white doſt ſpy
Years come a-forming lie,
Close in their ſacred fecundine aſleep.

The ſame thought is more generally, and therefore more poetically, expreſſed by Caſimir, a writer, who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley:

Omnibus mundi Dominator horis
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,
Pars adhuc nido latet, & futuros
Creſcit in annos.

Cowley, whatever was his ſubject, ſeems to have been carried, by a kind of deſtiny, to the light and the familiar, or to conceits which require ſtill more ignoble epithets. A ſlaughter in the Red Sea *new dies the waters name*; and England, during the Civil War, was *Albion no more, nor to be named from white*. It is ſurely by ſome faſcination not eaſily ſurmounted, that a writer, profeſſing to revive *the nobleſt and higheſt writing in verſe*, makes this addreſs to the new year:

Nay,

Nay, if thou lov'ſt me, gentle year,
Let not ſo much as love be there,
Vain, fruitleſs love I mean; for, gentle year,
Although I fear,
There's of this caution little need;
Yet, gentle year, take heed
How thou doſt make
Such a miſtake;
Such love I mean alone
As by thy cruel predeceſſors has been ſhewn;
For, though I have too much cauſe to doubt it,
I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it.

The reader of this will be inclined to cry out with Prior—

Ye Critics, ſay,
How poor to this was Pindar's ſtyle!

Even thoſe who cannot perhaps find in the Iſthmian or Nemæan ſongs what Antiquity has diſpoſed them to expect, will at leaſt ſee that they are ill repreſented by ſuch puny poetry; and all will determine that, if this be the old Theban ſtrain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the disproportion and incongruity of Cowley's sentiments must be added the uncertainty and looseness of his measures. He takes the liberty of using in any place a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve. The verses of Pindar have, as he observes, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet by examining the syllables we perceive them to be regular, and have reason enough for supposing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the sound. The imitator ought therefore to have adopted what he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preserved a constant return of the same numbers, and to have supplied smoothness of transition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat, that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing* which makes *that kind of poesy fit for all manner of subjects*. But he should have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If

If the Pindarick ſtyle be, what Cowley thinks it, *the higheſt and nobleſt kind of writing in verſe*, it can be adapted only to high and noble ſubjects; and it will not be eaſy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the higheſt kind of writing in verſe which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to proſe.*

This lax and lawleſs verſification ſo much concealed the deficiences of the barren, and flattered the lazineſs of the idle, that it immediately overſpread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleaſing faſhion, and they that could do nothing elſe could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and diſorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem * on the Sheldonian Theatre, in which all kinds of verſe are ſhaken together, is unhappily inſerted in the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*. Pindariſm prevailed about half

* Firſt publiſhed in quarto, 1669, under the title of "Carmen Pindaricum in Theatrum Sheldonianum in "ſolennibus magnifici Operis Encœniis. Recitatum Julii "die 9, Anno 1669, a Corbetto Owen, A. B. Æd. Chr. "Alumno Authore." R.

a cen-

a century; but at laſt died gradually away, and other imitations ſupply its place.

The Pindarick Odes have ſo long enjoyed the higheſt degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to diſmiſs them with unabated cenſure; and ſurely though the mode of their compoſition be erroneous, yet many parts deſerve at leaſt that admiration which is due to great comprehenſion of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often ſtriking; but the greatneſs of one part is diſgraced by the littleneſs of another; and total negligence of language gives the nobleſt conceptions the appearance of a fabric auguſt in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet ſurely theſe verſes are not without a juſt claim to praiſe; of which it may be ſaid with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

The Davideis now remains to be conſidered; a poem which the author deſigned to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no ſcruple of declaring, becauſe the Æneid had that number; but he had leiſure or perſeverance only to write the third

part. Epick poems have been left unfiniſhed by Virgil, Statius, Spenſer, and Cowley. That we have not the whole Davideis is, however, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, tacitly at leaſt, confeſſed to have miſcarried. There are not many examples of ſo great a work, produced by an author generally read, and generally praiſed, that has crept through a century with ſo little regard. Whatever is ſaid of Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the Davideis no mention is made; it never appears in books, nor emerges in converſation. By the *Spectator* it has been once quoted; by *Rymer* it has once been praiſed; and by *Dryden*, in "Mac Flecknoe," it has once been imitated; nor do I recollect much other notice from its publication till now in the whole ſucceſſion of Engliſh literature.

Of this ſilence and neglect, if the reaſon be inquired, it will be found partly in the choice of the ſubject, and partly in the performance of the work.

Sacred Hiſtory has been always read with ſubmiſſive reverence, and an imagination over-

over-awed and controlled. We have been accuſtomed to acquieſce in the nakedneſs and ſimplicity of the authentic narrative, and to repoſe on its veracity with ſuch humble confidence as ſuppreſſes curioſity. We go with the hiſtorian as he goes, and ſtop with him when he ſtops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already ſufficient for the purpoſes of religion ſeems not only uſeleſs, but in ſome degree profane.

Such events as were produced by the viſible interpoſition of Divine Power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, however it may teem with images, is beſt deſcribed with little diffuſion of language: *He ſpake the word, and they were made.*

We are told that Saul *was troubled with an evil ſpirit*; from this Cowley takes an opportunity of deſcribing hell, and telling the hiſtory of Lucifer, who was, he ſays,

One general of a gilded hoſt of ſprites
Like Heſper leading forth the ſpangled nights;

But

But down like lightning, which him ſtruck, he came,
And roar'd at his firſt plunge into the flame.

Lucifer makes a ſpeech to the inferior agents of miſchief, in which there is ſomething of heatheniſm, and therefore of impropriety; and, to give efficacy to his words, concludes by laſhing *his breaſt with his long tail.* Envy, after a pauſe, ſteps out, and among other declarations of her zeal utters theſe lines:

Do thou but threat, loud ſtorms ſhall make reply,
And thunder echo to the trembling ſky.
Whilſt raging ſeas ſwell to ſo bold an height,
As ſhall the fire's proud element affright.
Th' old drudging Sun, from his long-beaten way,
Shall at thy voice ſtart, and [illegible] day.
The jocund orbs ſhall break their meaſur'd pace,
And ſtubborn poles change their allotted place.
Heaven's gilded troops ſhall flutter here and there,
Leaving their boaſting ſongs tun'd to a ſphere.

Every reader feels himſelf weary with this uſeleſs talk of an allegorical Being.

It is not only when the events are confeſſedly miraculous, that fancy and fiction loſe their effect: the whole ſyſtem of life, while the Theocracy was yet viſible, has an appearance ſo different from all other ſcenes of human action, that the reader of the Sacred Volume habitually conſiders it as the peculiar mode of exiſtence of a diſtinct ſpecies of mankind, that lived and acted with manners uncommunicable; ſo that it is difficult even for imagination to place us in the ſtate of them whoſe ſtory is related, and by conſequence their joys and griefs are not eaſily adopted, nor can the attention be often intereſted in any thing that befalls them.

To the ſubject thus originally indiſpoſed to the reception of poetical embelliſhments, the writer brought little that could reconcile impatience, or attract curioſity. Nothing can be more diſguſting than a narrative ſpangled with conceits; and conceits are all that the Davideis ſupplies.

One of the great ſources of poetical delight is deſcription, or the power of preſent-

ing pictures to the mind. Cowley gives inferences inſtead of images, and ſhews not what may be ſuppoſed to have been ſeen, but what thoughts the ſight might have ſuggeſted. When Virgil deſcribes the ſtone which Turnus lifted againſt Æneas, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

Saxum circumſpicit ingens,
Saxum antiquum, ingens, campo quod forte jacebat
Limes agro poſitus, litem ut diſcerneret arvis.

Cowley ſays of the ſtone with which Cain ſlew his brother,

I ſaw him fling the ſtone, as if he meant
At once his murther and his monument.

Of the ſword taken from Goliah, he ſays,

A ſword ſo great, that it was only fit
To cut off his great head that came with it.

Other poets deſcribe death by ſome of its common appearances. Cowley ſays, with a learned

learned alluſion to ſepulchral lamps real or fabulous,

'Twixt his right ribs deep piere'd the furious blade,
And open'd wide thoſe ſecret veſſels where
Life's light goes out, when firſt they let-in air.

But he has alluſions vulgar as well as learned. In a viſionary ſucceſſion of kings:

Joas at firſt does bright and glorious ſhow,
In life's freſh morn his fame does early crow.

Deſcribing an undiſciplined army, after having ſaid with elegance,

His forces ſeem'd no army, but a crowd
Heartleſs, unarm'd, diſorderly, and loud,

he gives them a fit of the ague.

The alluſions, however, are not always to vulgar things: he offends by exaggeration as much as by diminution:

The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head
A well-wrought heaven of ſilk and gold was ſpread.

Whatever he writes is always polluted with ſome conceit:

Where the ſun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
Where he the growth of fatal gold does ſee,
Gold, which alone more influence has than he.

In one paſſage he ſtarts a ſudden queſtion, to the confuſion of philoſophy:

Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,
Why does that twining plant the oak embrace;
The oak for courtſhip moſt of all unfit,
And rough as are the winds that fight with it?

His expreſſions have ſometimes a degree of meanneſs that ſurpaſſes expectation:

Nay, gentle gueſts, he cries, ſince now you're in,
The ſtory of your gallant friend begin.

In a ſimile deſcriptive of the Morning:

As glimmering ſtars juſt at th' approach of day,
Caſhier'd by troops, at laſt drop all away.

The

The dreſs of Gabriel deſerves attention:

He took for ſkin a cloud moſt ſoft and bright,
That e'er the mid-day ſun pierc'd through with light;
Upon his cheeks a lively bluſh he ſpread,
Waſh'd from the morning beauties' deepeſt red;
An harmleſs flattering meteor ſhone for hair,
And fell adown his ſhoulders with looſe care;
He cuts out a ſilk mantle from the ſkies,
Where the moſt ſprightly azure pleas'd the eyes;
This he with ſtarry vapours ſprinkles all,
Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;
Of a new rainbow ere it fret or fade,
The choiceſt piece cut out, a ſcarfe is made.

This is a juſt ſpecimen of Cowley's imagery: what might in general expreſſions be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into ſmall parts. That Gabriel was inveſted with the ſofteſt or brighteſt colours of the ſky, we might have been told, and been diſmiſſed to improve the idea in our different proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he had related where Gabriel got firſt his ſkin, and then his mantle, then his lace, and then

his ſcarfe, and related it in the terms of the mercer and taylor.

Sometimes he indulges himſelf in a digreſſion, always conceived with his natural exuberance, and commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it is tedious:

I' th' library a few choice authors ſtood,
Yet 'twas well ſtor'd, for that ſmall ſtore was good;
Writing, man's ſpiritual phyſic, was not then
Itſelf, as now, grown a diſeaſe of men.
Learning (young virgin) but few ſuitors knew;
The common proſtitute ſhe lately grew,
And with the ſpurious brood loads now the preſs;
Laborious effects of idleneſs.

As the Davideis affords only four books, though intended to conſiſt of twelve, there is no opportunity for ſuch criticiſms as Epick poems commonly ſupply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly ſhewn by the third part. The duration of an unfiniſhed action cannot be known. Of characters either not yet introduced, or ſhewn but upon few occaſions, the full extent and the nice diſcriminations cannot be aſcertained. The fable

fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the Odyſſey than the Iliad: and many artifices of diverſification are employed, with the ſkill of a man acquainted with the beſt models. The paſt is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by viſion: but he has been ſo laviſh of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practiſing again the ſame modes of diſpoſing his matter; and perhaps the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to ſtop. By this abruption, poſterity loſt more inſtruction than delight. If the continuation of the Davideis can be miſſed, it is for the learning that had been diffuſed over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved like every other part by improper decorations, they would have deſerved uncommon praiſe. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero:

His way once choſe, he forward thruſt outright,
Nor turn'd aſide for danger or delight.

And the different beauties of the lofty Merah and the gentle Michol are very juſtly conceived and ſtrongly painted.

Rymer has declared the Davideis ſuperior to the *Jeruſalem of Taſſo*, "which," ſays he, "the poet, with all his care, has not totally "purged from pedantry." If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular ſciences and ſtudies, in oppoſition to the general notions ſupplied by a wide ſurvey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry far more frequently than Taſſo. I know not, indeed, why they ſhould be compared; for the reſemblance of Cowley's work to Taſſo's is only that they both exhibit the agency of celeſtial and infernal ſpirits, in which however they differ widely; for Cowley ſuppoſes them commonly to operate upon the mind by ſuggeſtion; Taſſo repreſents them as promoting or obſtructing events by external agency.

Of particular paſſages that can be properly compared, I remember only the deſcription of Heaven, in which the different

manner of the two writers is ſufficiently diſcernible. Cowley's is ſcarcely deſcription, unleſs it be poſſible to deſcribe by negatives; for he tells us only what there is not in heaven. Taſſo endeavours to repreſent the ſplendours and pleaſures of the regions of happineſs. Taſſo affords images, and Cowley ſentiments. It happens, however, that Taſſo's deſcription affords ſome reaſon for Rymer's cenſure. He ſays of the Supreme Being,

Hà ſotto i piedi e fato e la natura
Miniſtri humili, e'l moto, e ch'il miſura.

The ſecond line has in it more of pedantry than perhaps can be found in any other ſtanza of the poem.

In the peruſal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably ſquandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we are ſometimes ſurpriſed, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind

mind capacious by nature, and repleniſhed by ſtudy.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unſkilful ſelection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetick, and rarely ſublime; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is ſaid by Denham in his elegy,

To him no author was unknown;
Yet what he writ was all his own.

This wide poſition requires leſs limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than perhaps of any other poet.—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

His character of writing was indeed not his own: he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He ſaw a certain way to preſent praiſe; and not ſufficiently enquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human man-

manners, he contented himſelf with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its ſpring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually ſtealing from his brows.

He was in his own time conſidered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon repreſents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him; and Milton is ſaid to have declared, that the three greateſt Engliſh poets were Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Cowley.

His manner he had in common with others: but his ſentiments were his own. Upon every ſubject he thought for himſelf; and ſuch was his copiouſneſs of knowledge, that ſomething at once remote and applicable ruſhed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely becauſe another had uſed it: his known wealth was ſo great, that he might have borrowed without loſs of credit.

In his elegy on Sir Henry Wotton, the laſt lines have ſuch reſemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius upon the death of Scaliger, that

that I cannot but think them copied from it, though they are copied by no ſervile hand.

One paſſage in his *Miſtreſs* is ſo apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts, ſo as that he did not perceive himſelf taking it from another:

Although I think thou never found wilt be,
Yet I'm reſolv'd to ſearch for thee;
The ſearch itſelf rewards the pains.
So, though the chymic his great ſecret miſs,
(For neither it in Art or Nature is)
Yet things well worth his toil he gains:
And does his charge and labour pay
With good unſought experiments by the way.
COWLEY.

Some that have deeper digg'd Love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happineſs doth lie:
I have lov'd, and got, and told;
But ſhould I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I ſhould not find that hidden myſtery;
Oh, 'tis impoſture all:
And as no chymic yet th' elixir got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot,

If

If by the way to him befal
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-ſeeming ſummer's night.

Jonſon and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the higheſt eſteem.

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledges his obligation to the learning and induſtry of Jonſon; but I have found no traces of Jonſon in his works: to emulate Donne, appears to have been his purpoſe; and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light alluſion to ſacred things, by which readers far ſhort of ſanctity are frequently offended; and which would not be born in the preſent age, when devotion, perhaps not more fervent, is more delicate.

Having produced one paſſage taken by Cowley from Donne, I will recompenſe him by another which Milton ſeems to have borrowed from him. He ſays of Goliah,

His

His ſpear, the trunk was of a lofty tree,
Which Nature meant ſome tall ſhip's maſt ſhould be.

Milton of Satan:

His ſpear, to equal which the talleſt pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the maſt
Of ſome great admiral, were but a wand,
He walked with.

His diction was in his own time cenſured as negligent. He ſeems not to have known, or not to have conſidered, that words being arbitrary muſt owe their power to aſſociation, and have the influence, and that only, which cuſtom has given them. Language is the dreſs of thought: and as the nobleſt mien, or moſt graceful action, would be degraded and obſcured by a garb appropriated to the groſs employments of ruſticks or mechanicks; ſo the moſt heroic ſentiments will loſe their efficacy, and the moſt ſplendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words uſed commonly upon low and trivial occaſions, debaſed by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Truth indeed is always truth, and reaſon is always reaſon; they have an intrinſic and unalterable value, and conſtitute that intellectual gold which defies deſtruction: but gold may be ſo concealed in baſer matter, that only a chymiſt can recover it; ſenſe may be ſo hidden in unrefined and plebeian words, that none but philoſophers can diſtinguiſh it; and both may be ſo buried in impurities, as not to pay the coſt of their extraction.

The diction, being the vehicle of the thoughts, firſt preſents itſelf to the intellectual eye: and if the firſt appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often ſought. Whatever profeſſes to benefit by pleaſing, muſt pleaſe at once. The pleaſures of the mind imply ſomething ſudden and unexpected; that which elevates muſt always ſurpriſe. What is perceived by ſlow degrees may gratify us with conſciouſneſs of improvement, but will never ſtrike with the ſenſe of pleaſure.

Of all this, Cowley appears to have been without knowledge, or without care. He makes

makes no ſelection of words, nor ſeeks any neatneſs of phraſe: he has no elegance either lucky or elaborate; as his endeavours were rather to impreſs ſentences upon the underſtanding than images on the fancy, he has few epithets, and thoſe ſcattered without peculiar propriety of nice adaptation. It ſeems to follow from the neceſſity of the ſubject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroic poem is leſs familiar than that of his ſlighteſt writings. He has given not the ſame numbers, but the ſame diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempeſtuous Pindar.

His verſification ſeems to have had very little of his care; and if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmuſical only when they are ill read, the art of reading them is at preſent loſt; for they are commonly harſh to modern ears. He has indeed many noble lines, ſuch as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts ſometimes ſwelled his verſe to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he ſinks willingly down to his general careleſſneſs,

fulness, and avoids with very little care either meanness or asperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harsh;

One flings a mountain, and its rivers too
Torn up with't.

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns, or particles, or the like unimportant words, which disappoint the ear, and destroy the energy of the line.

His combination of different measures is sometimes dissonant and unpleasing; he joins verses together, of which the former does not slide easily into the latter.

The words *do* and *did*, which so much degrade in present estimation the line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little censured or avoided; how often he used them and with how bad an effect, at least to our ears, will appear by a passage, in which every reader will lament to see just and noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegance of language:

Where honour or where conſcience *does* not blind,
No other law ſhall ſhackle me;
Slave to myſelf I ne'er will be;
Nor ſhall my future actions be confin'd
By my own preſent mind.
Who by reſolves and vows engag'd *does* ſtand
For days, that yet belong to fate,
Does like an unthrift mortage his eſtate,
Before it falls into his hand,
The bondman of the cloiſter ſo,
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe.
And ſtill as Time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!
Unhappy ſlave, and pupil to a bell!
Which his hour's work as well as hours *does* tell:
Unhappy till the laſt, the kind releaſing knell.

His heroick lines are often formed of monoſyllables; but yet they are ſometimes ſweet and ſonorous.

He ſays of the Meſſiah,

Round the whole earth his dreaded name ſhall ſound,
And reach to worlds that muſt not yet be found.

In another place, of David,

Yet bid him go ſecurely, when he ſends;
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.

The

The man who has his God, no aid can lack;
And we who bid him go, will bring him back.

Yet amidſt his negligence he ſometimes attempted an improved and ſcientific verſification; of which it will be beſt to give his own account ſubjoined to this line:

Nor can the glory contain itſelf in th' endleſs ſpace.

"I am ſorry that it is neceſſary to admo-
"niſh the moſt part of readers, that it is not
"by negligence that this verſe is ſo looſe,
"long, and, as it were, vaſt; it is to paint
"in the number the nature of the thing
"which it deſcribes, which I would have
"obſerved in divers other places of this poem,
"that elſe will paſs for very careleſs verſes:
"as before,

And over-rns the neighb'ring fields with violent courſe.

"In the ſecond book;

Down a precipice deep, down he caſts them all.—

"—And,

And fell a-down his ſhoulders with looſe care.

" In the third,

Braſs was his helmet, his boots braſs, and o'er
His breaſt a thick plate of ſtrong braſs he wore.

" In the fourth,

Like ſome fair pine o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.

" And,

Some from the rocks caſt themſelves down headlong.

" And many more: but it is enough to in-
" ſtance in a few. The thing is, that the
" diſpoſition of words and numbers ſhould
" be ſuch, as that, out of the order and ſound
" of them, the things themſelves may be re-
" preſented. This the greeks were not ſo
" accurate as to bind themſelves to; neither
" have our Engliſh poets obſerved it, for
" aught I can find. The Latins (*qui muſas*
" *colunt ſeveriores*) ſometimes did it; and
" their prince, Virgil, always: in whom the
" examples are innumerable, and taken no-
" tice of by all judicious men, ſo that it is
" ſuperfluous to collect them."

I know not whether he has, in many of theſe inſtances, attained the repreſentation or reſem-

reſemblance that he purpoſes. Verſe can imitate only ſound and motion. A *boundleſs* verſe, a *headlong* verſe, and a verſe of *braſs* or of *ſtrong braſs*, ſeem to compriſe very incongruous and unſociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the ſound of the line expreſſing *looſe care*, I cannot diſcover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an Alexandrine than in ten ſyllables.

But, not to defraud him of his due praiſe, he has given one example of repreſentative verſification, which perhaps no other Engliſh line can equal:

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wiſe:
He, who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting ſtay
Till the whole ſtream that ſtopp'd him ſhall be gone,
Which runs, and, as it runs, for ever ſhall run on.

Cowley was, I believe, the firſt poet that mingled Alexandrines at pleaſure with the common heroick of ten ſyllables; and from him Dryden borrowed the practice, whether ornamental or licentious. He conſidered the verſe of twelve ſyllables as elevated and ma-

jeſtick, and has therefore deviated into that meaſure when he ſuppoſes the voice heard of the Supreme Being.

The Author of the Davideis is commended by Dryden for having written it in couplets, becauſe he diſcovered that any ſtaff was too lyrical for an heroick poem; but this ſeems to have been known before by *May* and *Sandys*, the tranſlators of the Pharſalia and the Metamorphoſes.

In the Davideis are ſome hemiſtichs, or verſes left imperfect by the author, in imitation of Virgil, whom he ſuppoſes not to have intended to complete them: that this opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, becauſe this truncation is imitated by no ſubſequent Roman poet; becauſe Virgil himſelf filled up one broken line in the heat of recitation; becauſe in one the ſenſe is now unfiniſhed; and becauſe all that can be done by a broken verſe, a line interſected by a *cæſura*, and a full ſtop, will equally effect.

Of triplets in his Davideis he makes no uſe, and perhaps did not at firſt think them allowa-

allowable; but he appears afterwards to have changed his mind, for in the verſes on the government of Cromwell he inſerts them liberally with great happineſs.

After ſo much criticiſm on his Poems, the Eſſays which accompany them muſt not be forgotten. What is ſaid by Sprat of his converſation, that no man could draw from it any ſuſpicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to theſe compoſitions. No author ever kept his verſe and his proſe at a greater diſtance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his ſtyle has a ſmooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far-ſought, or hard-laboured; but all is eaſy without feebleneſs, and familiar without groſſneſs.

It has been obſerved by Felton, in his Eſſay on the Claſſicks, that Cowley was beloved by every Muſe that he courted; and that he has rivalled the Ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It may be affirmed, without any encomiaſtick fervour, that he brought to his poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embelliſhed with all the ornaments which books could ſupply; that he was the firſt who imparted to Engliſh numbers the enthuſiaſm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the leſs; that he was equally qualified for ſpritely ſallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among thoſe who freed tranſlation from ſervility, and, inſtead of following his author at a diſtance, walked by his ſide; and that, if he left verſification yet improveable, he left likewiſe from time to time ſuch ſpecimens of excellence as enabled ſucceeding poets to improve it.

DEN-

DENHAM.

OF Sir JOHN DENHAM very little is known but what is related of him by Wood, or by himſelf.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only ſon of Sir John Denham, of Little Horſely in Eſſex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and of Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret More, baron of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In

In 1631 he was ſent to Oxford, where he was conſidered "as a dreaming young man, "given more to dice and cards than ſtudy;" and therefore gave no prognoſticks of his future eminence; nor was ſuſpected to conceal, under ſluggiſhneſs and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he proſecuted the common law with ſufficient appearance of application; yet did not loſe his propenſity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gameſters.

Being ſeverely reproved for this folly, he profeſſed, and perhaps believed, himſelf reclaimed; and, to teſtify the ſincerity of his repentance, wrote and publiſhed "An Eſſay "upon Gaming."

He ſeems to have divided his ſtudies between law and poetry; for, in 1636, he tranſlated the ſecond book of the Æneid.

Two

Two years after, his father died; and then, notwithſtanding his reſolutions and profeſſions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and loſt ſeveral thouſand pounds that had been left him.

In 1642, he publiſhed "The Sophy." This ſeems to have given him his firſt hold of the publick attention; for Waller remarked, "that he broke out like the Iriſh rebellion "three ſcore thouſand ſtrong when nobody "was aware, or in the leaſt ſuſpected it;" an obſervation which could have had no propriety, had his poetical abilities been known before.

He was after that pricked for ſheriff of Surrey, and made governor of Farnham Caſtle for the king; but he ſoon reſigned that charge, and retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he publiſhed "Cooper's Hill."

This poem had ſuch reputation as to excite the common artifice by which envy degrades excellence. A report was ſpread, that the performance was not his own, but that he had

had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds. The ſame attempt was made to rob Addiſon of his Cato, and Pope of his Eſſay on Criticiſm.

In 1647, the diſtreſſes of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was entruſted by the queen with a meſſage to the king; and, by whatever means, ſo far ſoftened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that by his interceſſion admiſſion was procured. Of the king's condeſcenſion he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the king's correſpondence; and, as he ſays, diſcharged this office with great ſafety to the royaliſts: and being accidentally diſcovered by the adverſe party's knowledge of Mr. Cowley's hand, he eſcaped happily both for himſelf and his friends.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648, he conveyed James the duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the queen and

prince of Wales. This year he publiſhed his tranſlation of "Cato Major."

He now reſided in France, as one of the followers of the exiled king; and, to divert the melancholy of their condition, was ſometimes enjoined by his maſter to write occaſional verſes; one of which amuſements was probably his ode or ſong upon the Embaſſy to Poland, by which he and lord Croſts procured a contribution of ten thouſand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and of great extent, where every man reſided on his own eſtate, contributed very much to the accommodation of life, by bringing to every man's houſe thoſe little neceſſaries which it was very inconvenient to want, and very troubleſome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were not ſmall, the ſucceſs of this negociation gives ſufficient evidence.

About

About this time, what eſtate the war and the gameſters had left him was ſold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England, he was entertained by the earl of Pembroke.

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Reſtoration he obtained that which many miſſed, the reward of his loyalty; being made ſurveyor of the king's buildings, and dignified with the order of the Bath. He ſeems now to have learned ſome attention to money; for Wood ſays, that he got by this place ſeven thouſand pounds.

After the Reſtoration he wrote the poem on Prudence and Juſtice, and perhaps ſome of his other pieces: and as he appears, whenever any ſerious queſtion comes before him, to have been a man of piety, he conſecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made a metrical verſion of the pſalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but in ſacred poetry who has ſucceeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his maſter and eſteem of the publick would now make him happy. But human felicity is ſhort and uncertain; a ſecond marriage brought upon him ſo much diſquiet, as for a time diſordered his underſtanding; and Butler lampooned him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made publick, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuſe.

His frenzy laſted not long*; and he ſeems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley, whom he was not long to ſervive; for on the 19th of March, 1668, he was buried by his ſide.

* In Grammont's Memoirs many circumſtances are related, both of his marriage and his frenzy, very little favourable to his character. R.

DENHAM is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry. "Denham "and Waller," says Prior, "improved our "versification, and Dryden perfected it." He has given specimens of various composition, descriptive, ludicrous, didactick, and sublime.

He appears to have had, in common with almost all mankind, the ambition of being upon proper occasions *a merry fellow*, and in common with most of them to have been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from it. Nothing is less exhilarating than the ludicrousness of Denham; he does not fail for want of efforts; he is familiar, he is gross; but he is never merry, unless the "Speech "against peace in the close Committee" be excepted. For grave burlesque, however, his imitation of Davenant shews him to have been well qualified.

Of his more elevated occasional poems there is perhaps none that does not deserve commendation. In the verses to Fletcher, we have an image that has since been adopted:

But

" But whither am I ſtray'd? I need not raiſe
" Trophies to thee from other men's diſpraiſe;
" Nor is thy fame on leſſer ruins built,
" Nor need thy juſter title the foul guilt
" Of eaſtern kings, who, to ſecure their reign,
" Muſt have their brothers, ſons, and kindred
" ſlain."

After Denham, Orrery, in one of his prologues,

" Poets are ſultans, if they had their will;
" For every author would his brother kill."

And Pope,

" Should ſuch a man, too fond to rule alone,
" Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne."

But this is not the beſt of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem to Fanſhaw, and his elegy on Cowley.

His praiſe of Fanſhaw's verſion of Guarini, contains a very ſpritely and judicious character of a good tranſlator:

" That ſervile path thou nobly doſt decline,
" Of tracing word by word, and line by line.

"Thoſe are the labour'd births of ſlaviſh brains,
"Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
"Cheap vulgar arts, whoſe narrowneſs affords
"No flight for thoughts, but poorly ſtick at words.
"A new and nobler way thou doſt purſue,
"To make tranſlations and tranſlators too.
"They but preſerve the aſhes, thou the flame,
"True to his ſenſe, but truer to his fame."

The excellence of theſe lines is greater, as the truth which they contain was not at that time generally known.

His poem on the death of Cowley was his laſt, and, among his ſhorter works, his beſt performance: the numbers are muſical, and the thoughts are juſt.

"COOPER'S HILL" is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity of an original author. He ſeems to have been, at leaſt among us, the author of a ſpecies of compoſition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental ſubject is ſome particular landſcape, to be poetically deſcribed, with the addition of ſuch embelliſhments

liſhments as may be ſupplied by hiſtorical retroſpection or incidental meditation.

To trace a new ſcheme of poetry has in itſelf a very high claim to praiſe, and its praiſe is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and Pope *; after whoſe names little will be gained by an enumeration of ſmaller poets, that have left ſcarcely a corner of the iſland not dignified either by rhyme, or blank verſe.

"COOPER'S HILL," if it be maliciouſly inſpected, will not be found without its faults. The digreſſions are too long, the morality too frequent, and the ſentiments ſometimes ſuch as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verſes, which, ſince Dryden has commended them, almoſt every writer for a century paſt has imitated, are generally known:

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
"My great example, as it is my theme!

* By Garth, in his "Poem on Claremont," and by Pope, in his "Windſor Foreſt." H.

" Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet
" not dull;
" Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing
" full."

The lines are in themſelves not perfect; for moſt of the words, thus artfully oppoſed, are to be underſtood ſimply on one ſide of the compariſon, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language which does not expreſs intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be tranſlated. But ſo much meaning is comprized in few words; the particulars of reſemblance are ſo perſpicaciouſly collected, and every mode of excellence ſeparated from its adjacent fault by ſo nice a line of limitation; the different parts of the ſentence are ſo accurately adjuſted; and the flow of the laſt couplet is ſo ſmooth and ſweet; that the paſſage, however celebrated, has not been praiſed above its merit. It has beauty peculiar to itſelf, and muſt be numbered among thoſe felicities which cannot be produced at will by wit and labour, but muſt ariſe unexpectedly in ſome hour propitious to poetry.

He

He appears to have been one of the firſt that underſtood the neceſſity of emancipating tranſlation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting ſingle words. How much this ſervile practice obſcured the cleareſt and deformed the moſt beautiful parts of the ancient authors, may be diſcovered by a peruſal of our earlier verſions; ſome of them the works of men well qualified, not only by critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, who yet, by a miſtaken ambition of exactneſs, degraded at once their originals and themſelves.

Denham ſaw the better way, but has not purſued it with great ſucceſs. His verſions of Virgil are not pleaſing; but they taught Dryden to pleaſe better. His poetical imitation of Tully on "Old Age" has neither the clearneſs of proſe, nor the ſpritelineſs of poetry.

The "ſtrength of Denham," which Pope ſo emphatically mentions, is to be found in many lines and couplets, which convey much

meaning in few words, and exhibit the ſentiment with more weight than bulk.

On the Thames.

" Though with thoſe ſtreams he no reſemblance
" hold,
" Whoſe foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
" His genuine and leſs guilty wealth t' explore,
" Search not his bottom, but ſurvey his ſhore."

On Strafford.

" His wiſdom ſuch, as once it did appear
" Three kingdoms' wonder, and three king-
" doms' fear.
" While ſingle he ſtood forth, and ſeem'd,
" although
" Each had an army, as an equal foe,
" Such was his force of eloquence, to make
" The hearers more concern'd than he that ſpake:
" Each ſeem'd to act that part he came to ſee,
" And none was more a looker-on than he;
" So did he move our paſſions, ſome were known
" To wiſh, for the defence, the crime their own.
" Now private pity ſtrove with publick hate,
" Reaſon with rage, and eloquence with fate."

On Cowley.

" To him no author was unknown,
" Yet what he wrote was all his own;

" Horace's

" Horace's wit, and Virgil's ſtate,
" He did not ſteal, but emulate!
" And when he would like them appear,
" Their garb, but not their cloaths, did wear."

As one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of poſterity ariſes from his improvement of our numbers, his verſification ought to be conſidered. It will afford that pleaſure which ariſes from the obſervation of a man of judgement, naturally right, forſaking bad copies by degrees, and advancing towards a better practice, as he gains more confidence in himſelf.

In his tranſlation of Virgil, written when he was about twenty-one years old, may be ſtill found the old manner of continuing the ſenſe ungracefully from verſe to verſe.

" Then all thoſe
" Who in the dark our fury did eſcape,
" Returning, know our borrow'd arms, and
" ſhape,
" And differing dialect: then their numbers ſwell
" And grow upon us; firſt Chorœbeus fell
" Before Minerva's altar; next did bleed
" Juſt Ripheus, whom no Trojan did exceed
" In virtue, yet the gods his fate decreed.

" Then Hypanis and Dymas, wounded by
" Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus, thy piety,
" Nor conſecrated mitre, from the ſame
" Ill fate could ſave; my country's funeral flame
" And Troy's cold aſhes I atteſt, and call
" To witneſs for myſelf, that in their fall
" No foes, or death, nor danger I declin'd,
" Did and deſerv'd no leſs, my fate to find."

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their ſenſe in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much conſtancy purſued.

This paſſage exhibits one of thoſe triplets which are not infrequent in this firſt eſſay, but which is to be ſuppoſed his maturer judgement diſapproved, ſince in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are ſuch as ſeem found without difficulty, by following the ſenſe; and are for the moſt part as exact at leaſt as thoſe of other poets, though now and then the reader is ſhifted off with what he can get.

" O how

" O how *transform'd!*
" How much unlike that Hector, who *return'd*
" Clad in Achilles' ſpoils!

And again:

" From thence a thouſand leſſer poets *ſprung*
" Like pretty princes from the fall of *Rome.*"

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is laid upon a word too feeble to ſuſtain it:

" Troy confounded falls
" From all her glories: if it might have ſtood
" By any power, by this right hand it *ſhou'd.*
" —And though my outward ſtate misfortune
" *hath*
" Depreſt thus low, it cannot reach my faith."
" — Thus, by his fraud and our own faith o'er-
" come,
" A feigned tear deſtroys us, againſt *whom*
" Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,
" Nor ten years conflict, nor a thouſand fail."

He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verſes: in one paſſage the word *die* rhimes three couplets in ſix.

Moſt

Moſt of theſe petty faults are in his firſt productions, when he was leſs ſkilful, or at leaſt leſs dexterous in the uſe of words; and though they had been more frequent they could only have leſſened the grace, not the ſtrength of his compoſition. He is one of the writers that improved our taſte, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

MILTON.

THE Life of Milton has been already written in ſo many forms, and with ſuch minute enquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myſelf with the addition of a few notes to Mr. Fenton's elegant Abridgement, but that a new narrative was thought neceſſary to the uniformity of this edition.

JOHN MILTON was by birth a gentleman, deſcended from the proprietors of Milton near Thame in Oxfordſhire, one of whom forfeited his eſtate in the times of York and Lancaſter. Which ſide he took I know not; his deſcendant inherited no veneration for the White Roſe.

His

His grandfather John was keeper of the foreſt of Shotover, a zealous papiſt, who diſinherited his ſon, becauſe he had forſaken the religion of his anceſtors.

His father, John, who was the ſon diſinherited, had recourſe for his ſupport to the profeſſion of a ſcrivener. He was a man eminent for his ſkill in muſick, many of his compoſitions being ſtill to be found; and his reputation in his profeſſion was ſuch, that he grew rich, and retired to an eſtate. He had probably more than common literature, as his ſon addreſſes him in one of his moſt elaborate Latin poems. He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caſton, a Welſh family, by whom he had two ſons, John the poet, and Chriſtopher, who ſtudied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the King's party, for which he was awhile perſecuted; but having, by his brother's intereſt, obtained permiſſion to live in quiet, he ſupported himſelf ſo honourably by chamber-practice, that, ſoon after the acceſſion of King James, he was knighted and made a Judge; but, his conſtitution being too weak

for buſineſs, he retired before any diſreputable compliances became neceſſary.

He had likewiſe a daughter Anne, whom he married with a conſiderable fortune to Edward Philips, who came from Shrewſbury, and roſe in the Crown office to be ſecondary: by him ſhe had two ſons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from whom is derived the only authentic account of his domeſtic manners.

John, the Poet, was born in his father's houſe, at the Spread-Eagle in Bread-ſtreet, Dec. 9, 1608, between ſix and ſeven in the morning. His father appears to have been very ſolicitous about his education; for he was inſtructed at firſt by private tuition under the care of Thomas Young, who was afterwards chaplain to the Engliſh merchants at Hamburgh, and of whom we have reaſon to think well, ſince his ſcholar conſidered him as worthy of an epiſtolary elegy.

He was then ſent to St. Paul's School, under the care of Mr. Gill; and removed, in the beginning of his ſixteenth year, to Chriſt's

Chriſt's College in Cambridge, where he entered a ſizar *, Feb. 12, 1624.

He was at this time eminently ſkilled in the Latin tongue; and he himſelf, by annexing the dates to his firſt compoſitions, a boaſt of which *Politian* had given him an example, ſeems to commend the earlineſs of his own proficiency to the notice of poſterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been ſurpaſſed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an eſtimate: many have excelled Milton in their firſt eſſays, who never roſe to works like *Paradiſe Loſt*.

At fifteen, a date which he uſes till he is ſixteen, he tranſlated or verſified two Pſalms, 114 and 136, which he thought worthy of

* In this aſſertion Dr. Johnſon was miſtaken. Milton was admitted a penſioner, and not a ſizar, as will appear by the following extract from the College Regiſter: "Johannes Milton Londinenſis, filius Johannis, inſtitutus "fuit in literarum Elementis ſub Mag'ro Gill Gymnaſii "Paulini præfecto, admiſſus eſt *Penſionarius Minor* Feb. "12°, 1624, ſub M'ro Chappell, ſolvitq. pro Ingr. "£. 0 10s. 0d." R.

the

the publick eye; but they raiſe no great expectations; they would in any numerous ſchool have obtained praiſe, but not excited wonder.

Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice diſcernment. I once heard Mr. Hampton, the tranſlator of Polybius, remark what I think is true, that Milton was the firſt Engliſhman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verſes with claſſick elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Aſcham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they have ſucceeded in proſe, no ſooner attempt verſes than they provoke deriſion. If we produced any thing worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps *Alabaſter's Roxana* *.

Of theſe exerciſes, which the rules of the Univerſity required, ſome were publiſhed by him in his maturer years. They had been undoubtedly applauded; for they were ſuch

* Publiſhed 1632. R.

as

as few can form: yet there is reaſon to ſuſpect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondneſs. That he obtained no fellowſhip is certain; but the unkindneſs with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am aſhamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the laſt ſtudents in either univerſity that ſuffered the publick indignity of corporal correction.

It was, in the violence of controverſial hoſtility, objected to him, that he was expelled: this he ſteadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it ſeems plain from his own verſes to *Diodati*, that he had incurred *Ruſtication*; a temporary diſmiſſion into the country, with perhaps the loſs of a term.

Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thameſis alluit undâ,
Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura reviſere Camum,
Nec dudum *vetiti* me *laris* angit amor.—
Nec duri libet uſque minas perferre magiſtri,
Cæteraque ingenio non ſubeunda meo.
Si ſit hoc *exilium* patrias adiiſſe penates,
Et vacuum curis otia grata ſequi,
Non ego vel *profugi* nomen ſortemve recuſo,
Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor.

I can-

I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindneſs and reverence can give to the term, *vetiti laris*, "a habitation from which he is excluded;" or how *exile* can be otherwiſe interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous maſter, and ſomething elſe, which a temper like his cannot undergo.* What was more than threat was probably puniſhment. This poem, which mentions his *exile*, proves likewiſe that it was not perpetual; for it concludes with a reſolution of returning ſome time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured, from the willingneſs with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cauſe was ſuch as gave him no ſhame.

He took both the uſual degrees; that of Batchelor in 1628, and that of Maſter in 1632; but he left the univerſity with no kindneſs for its inſtitution, alienated either by the injudicious ſeverity of his governors, or his own captious perverſeneſs. The cauſe cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His ſcheme of education, inſcribed to *Hartlib*, ſuperſedes all academical

inſtruction, being intended to compriſe the whole time which men uſually ſpend in literature, from their entrance upon grammar, *till they proceed, as it is called, maſters of arts.* And in his Diſcourſe *on the likelieſt Way to remove Hirelings out of the Church,* he ingenuouſly propoſes, that *the profits of the lands forfeited by the act for ſuperſtitious uſes, ſhould be applied to ſuch academies all over the land where languages and arts may be taught together; ſo that youth may be at once brought up, to a competency of learning and an honeſt trade, by which means ſuch of them as had the gift, being enabled to ſupport themſelves (without tithes) by the latter, may, by the help of the former, become worthy preachers.*

One of his objections to academical education, as it was then conducted, is, that men deſigned for orders in the Church were permitted to act plays, *writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antick and diſhoneſt geſtures of Trincalos* *, *buffoons and bawds, proſtituting the*

* By the mention of this name, he evidently refers to Albumazar, acted at Cambridge in 1614. Ignoramus and other plays were performed at the ſame time. The practice

the ſhame of that miniſtry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and court-ladies, their grooms and mademoiſelles.

This is ſufficiently peeviſh in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from the college, relates, with great luxuriance, the compenſation which the pleaſures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academicks.

He went to the univerſity with a deſign of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman muſt "ſubſcribe ſlave, and "take an oath withal, which, unleſs he took "with a conſcience that could not retch, he "muſt ſtraight perjure himſelf. He thought "it better to prefer a blameleſs ſilence before "the office of ſpeaking, bought and begun "with ſervitude and forſwearing."

tice was then very frequent. The laſt dramatick performance at either univerſity was *The Grateful Fair*, written by Chriſtopher Smart, and repreſented at Pembroke College, Cambridge, about 1747. R.

Theſe expreſſions are, I find, applied to the ſubſcription of the Articles; but it ſeems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any of the Articles which ſeem to thwart his opinions: but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raiſed his indignation.

His unwillingneſs to engage in the miniſtry, perhaps not yet advanced to a ſettled reſolution of declining it, appears in a letter to one of his friends, who had reproved his ſuſpended and dilatory life, which he ſeems to have imputed to an inſatiable curioſity, and fantaſtick luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool and plauſible anſwer, in which he endeavours to perſuade him, that the delay proceeds not from the delights of deſultory ſtudy, but from the deſire of obtaining more fitneſs for his taſk; and that he goes on, *not taking thought of being late, ſo it give advantage to be more fit.*

When he left the univerſity, he returned to his father, then reſiding at Horton in Buckinghamſhire, with whom he lived five years,

years, in which time he is ſaid to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this univerſality is to be underſtood, who ſhall inform us?

It might be ſuppoſed, that he who read ſo much ſhould have done nothing elſe; but Milton found time to write the Maſque of *Comus*, which was preſented at Ludlow, then the reſidence of the Lord Preſident of Wales, in 1634; and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's ſons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's *Circe* *; but we never can refuſe to any modern

* It has nevertheleſs its foundation in reality. The earl of Bridgewater being Preſident of Wales in the year 1634, had his reſidence at Ludlow-caſtle in Shropſhire, at which time lord Brackly and Mr. Egerton, his ſons, and lady Alice Egerton, his daughter, paſſing through a place called the Hay-wood foreſt, or Haywood in Herefordſhire, were benighted, and the lady for a ſhort time loſt: this accident being related to their father upon their arrival at his caſtle, Milton, at the requeſt of his friend Henry Lawes, who taught muſic in the family, wrote this maſque. Lawes, ſet it to muſic, and it was acted on Michaelmas night; the two brothers, the young lady, and Lawes himſelf, bearing each a part in the repreſentation.

dern the liberty of borrowing from Homer:

——— a quo ceu fonte perenni
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

His next production was *Lycidas*, an elegy, written in 1637, on the death of Mr. King, the ſon of Sir John King, ſecretary for Ireland in the time of Elizabeth, James, and

The lady Alice Egerton became afterwards the wife of the earl of Carbury, who, at his ſeat called Golden-grove, in Caermarthenſhire, harbored Dr. Jeremy Taylor in the time of the Uſurpation. Among the doctor's ſermons is one on her death, in which her character is finely pourtrayed. Her ſiſter, lady Mary, was given in marriage to lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Notwithſtanding Dr. Johnſon's aſſertion, that the fiction is derived from Homer's Circe, it may be conjectured, that it was rather taken from the Comus of Erycius Puteanus, in which, under the fiction of a dream, the characters of Comus and his attendants are delineated, and the delights of ſenſualiſts expoſed and reprobated. This little tract was publiſhed at Louvain in 1611, and afterwards at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which Milton's Comus was written. H.

Milton evidently was indebted to the *Old Wives Tale* of George Peele for the plan of Comus. R.

Charles.

Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many of the wits joined to do honour to his memory. Milton's acquaintance with the Italian writers may be diſcovered by a mixture of longer and ſhorter verſes, according to the rules of Tuſcan poetry, and his malignity to the Church by ſome lines which are interpreted as threatening its extermination.

He is ſuppoſed about this time to have written his *Arcades*; for while he lived at Horton he uſed ſometimes to ſteal from his ſtudies a few days, which he ſpent at Harefield, the houſe of the counteſs dowager of Derby, where the *Arcades* made part of a dramatick entertainment.

He began now to grow weary of the country: and had ſome purpoſe of taking chambers in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother ſet him at liberty to travel, for which he obtained his father's conſent, and Sir Henry Wotton's directions, with the celebrated precept of prudence, *i penſieri ſtretti, ed il viſo ſciolto*; "thoughts cloſe, and looks looſe."

In 1638 he left England, and went firſt to Paris; where, by the favour of Lord *Scudamore*, he had the opportunity of viſiting *Grotius*, then reſiding at the French court as ambaſſador from Chriſtina of Sweden. From Paris he haſted into Italy, of which he had with particular diligence ſtudied the language and literature; and though he ſeems to have intended a very quick perambulation of the country, ſtaid two months at Florence; where he found his way into the academies, and produced his compoſitions with ſuch applauſe as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope, that, "by labour and intenſe ſtudy, "which," ſays he, "I take to be my portion in this life, joined with a ſtrong propenſity of nature," he might "leave ſomething ſo written to after-times, as they "ſhould not willingly let it die."

It appears, in all his writings, that he had the uſual concomitant of great abilities, a lofty and ſteady confidence in himſelf, perhaps not without ſome contempt of others; for ſcarcely any man ever wrote ſo much, and

and praiſed ſo few. Of his praiſe he was very frugal; as he ſet its value high, and conſidered his mention of a name as a ſecurity againſt the waſte of time, and a certain preſervation from oblivion.

At Florence he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted diſtinction. Carlo Dati preſented him with an encomiaſtic inſcription, in the tumid lapidary ſtyle; and Francini wrote him an ode, of which the firſt ſtanza is only empty noiſe; the reſt are perhaps too diffuſe on common topicks: but the laſt is natural and beautiful.

From Florence he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome, where he was again received with kindneſs by the Learned and the Great. Holſtenius, the keeper of the Vatican Library, who had reſided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini: and he, at a muſical entertainment, waited for him at the door, and led him by the hand into the aſſembly. Here Selvaggi praiſed him in a diſtich, and Salſilli in a tetraſtick: neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this literary

commerce; for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salſilli, though not ſecure againſt a ſtern grammarian, turn the balance indiſputably in Milton's favour.

Of theſe Italian teſtimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publiſh them before his poems; though he ſays, he cannot be ſuſpected but to have known that they were ſaid *non tam de ſe, quam ſupra ſe.*

At Rome, as at Florence, he ſtaid only two months; a time indeed ſufficient, if he deſired only to ramble with an explainer of its antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures; but certainly too ſhort for the contemplation of learning, policy, or manners.

From Rome he paſſed on to Naples, in company of a hermit, a companion from whom little could be expected; yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manſo marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of Taſſo. Manſo was enough delighted with his accompliſhments to honour him with a ſorry diſtich, in which he commends him for every thing but his religion: and Milton, in return,

return, addreſſed him in a Latin poem, which muſt have raiſed an high opinion of Engliſh elegance and literature.

His purpoſe was now to have viſited Sicily and Greece; but, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to haſten home, rather than paſs his life in foreign amuſements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. He therefore came back to Rome, though the merchants informed him of plots laid againſt him by the Jeſuits, for the liberty of his converſations on religion. He had ſenſe enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as before, neither obtruding nor ſhunning controverſy. He had perhaps given ſome offence by viſiting Galileo, then a priſoner in the inquiſition for philoſophical hereſy; and at Naples he was told by Manſo, that, by his declarations on religious queſtions, he had excluded himſelf from ſome diſtinctions which he ſhould otherwiſe have paid him. But ſuch conduct, though it did not pleaſe, was yet ſufficiently ſafe, and Milton ſtaid two months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without moleſtation.

From Florence he viſited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice; and, having ſent away a collection of muſic and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he probably conſidered as the metropolis of orthodoxy.

Here he repoſed, as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati and Frederick Spanheim, two learned profeſſors of Divinity. From Geneva he paſſed through France; and came home, after an abſence of a year and three months.

At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati; a man whom it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe of great merit, ſince he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem, intituled, *Epitaphium Damonis*, written with the common but childiſh imitation of paſtoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the houſe of one Ruſſel, a taylor in St. Bride's Churchyard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips, his ſiſter's ſons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a houſe and garden

garden in Alderſgate-ſtreet *, which was not then ſo much out of the world as it is now; and choſe his dwelling at the upper end of a paſſage, that he might avoid the noiſe of the ſtreet. Here he received more boys, to be boarded and inſtructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with ſome degree of merriment on great promiſes and ſmall performance, on the man who haſtens home, becauſe his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the ſcene of action, vapours away his patriotiſm in a private boarding-ſchool. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers ſeem inclined to

* This is inaccurately expreſſed: Philips, and Dr. Newton after him, ſay a garden houſe, i. e. a houſe ſituate in a garden, and of which there were, eſpecially in the north ſuburbs of London, very many, if not few elſe. The term is technical, and frequently occurs in the Athen. and Faſt. Oxon. The meaning thereof may be collected from the article Thomas Farnabe, the famous ſchoolmaſter, of whom the author ſays, that he taught in Goldſmith's Rents, in Cripplegate pariſh, behind Redcroſs-ſtreet, where were large gardens and handſome houſes. Milton's houſe in Jewin-ſtreet was alſo a garden-houſe, as were indeed moſt of his dwellings after his ſettlement in London. H.

ſhrink.

ſhrink. They are unwilling that Milton ſhould be degraded to a ſchool-maſter; but, ſince it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuſe an act which no wiſe man will conſider as in itſelf diſgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not ample; and he ſupplied its deficiencies by an honeſt and uſeful employment.

It is told, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable liſt is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Alderſgate-ſtreet, by youth between ten and fifteen or ſixteen years of age. Thoſe who tell or receive theſe ſtories ſhould conſider that nobody can be taught faſter than he can learn. The ſpeed of the horſeman muſt be limited by the power of his horſe. Every man, that has ever undertaken to inſtruct others, can tell what ſlow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention,

tion, to ſtimulate ſluggiſh indifference, and to rectify abſurd miſapprehenſion.

The purpoſe of Milton, as it ſeems, was to teach ſomething more ſolid than the common literature of Schools, by reading thoſe authors that treat of phyſical ſubjects; ſuch as the Georgick, and aſtronomical treatiſes of the ancients. This was a ſcheme of improvement which ſeems to have buſied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embelliſhments of life, formed the ſame plan of education in his imaginary College.

But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the ſciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent buſineſs of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or converſation, whether we wiſh to be uſeful or pleaſing, the firſt requiſite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the hiſtory of mankind, and with thoſe examples which may be ſaid to embody truth, and prove by events

events the reaſonableneſs of opinions. Prudence and Juſtice are virtues and excellences of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moraliſts, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourſe with intellectual nature is neceſſary; our ſpeculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leiſure. Phyſiological learning is of ſuch rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life without being able to eſtimate his ſkill in hydroſtaticks or aſtronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

Thoſe authors, therefore, are to be read at ſchools that ſupply moſt axioms of prudence, moſt principles of moral truth, and moſt materials for converſation; and theſe purpoſes are beſt ſerved by poets, orators, and hiſtorians.

Let me not be cenſured for this digreſſion as pedantick or paradoxical; for, if I have Milton againſt me, I have Socrates on my ſide. It was his labour to turn philoſophy from the ſtudy of nature to ſpeculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppoſe are turning

turning off attention from life to nature. They ſeem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the ſtars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται.

Of inſtitutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe, is a ſmall Hiſtory of Poetry, written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which perhaps none of my readers has ever heard *.

That in his ſchool, as in every thing elſe which he undertook, he laboured with great diligence, there is no reaſon for doubting. One part of his method deſerves general

* "We may be ſure at leaſt, that Dr. Johnſon had "never ſeen the book he ſpeaks of; for it is entirely com-"poſed in Engliſh, though its title begins with two Latin "words, 'Theatrum Poetarum; or, A complete Collec-"tion of the Poets,' &c. a circumſtance that probably "miſled the biographer of Milton." *European Magazine, June* 1787, p. 388. R.

imitation. He was careful to inſtruct his ſcholars in religion. Every Sunday was ſpent upon theology; of which he dictated a ſhort ſyſtem, gathered from the writers that were then faſhionable in Dutch univerſities.

He ſet his pupils an example of hard ſtudy and ſpare diet; only now and then he allowed himſelf to paſs a day of feſtivity and indulgence with ſome gay gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

He now began to engage in the controverſies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of contention. In 1641 he publiſhed a treatiſe of *Reformation*, in two books, againſt the eſtabliſhed Church; being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he ſays, *inferior to the Prelates in learning*.

Hall, biſhop of Norwich, had publiſhed an *Humble Remonſtrance*, in defence of Epiſcopacy; to which, in 1641, five miniſters *, of whoſe names the firſt letters made the celebrated word *Smectymnuus*, gave their

* Stephen Marſhall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spinſtow. R.

Anſwer. Of this Anſwer a Confutation was attempted by the learned *Uſher*; and to the Confutation Milton publiſhed a Reply, intituled, *Of Prelatical Epiſcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apoſtolical Times, by virtue of thoſe teſtimonies which are alledged to that purpoſe in ſome late treatiſes, one whereof goes under the name of James Lord Biſhop of Armagh.*

I have tranſcribed this title to ſhew, by his contemptuous mention of Uſher, that he had now adopted the puritanical ſavageneſs of manners. His next work was, *The Reaſon of Church Government urged againſt Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton*, 1642. In this book he diſcovers, not with oſtentatious exultation, but with calm confidence, his high opinion of his own powers; and promiſes to undertake ſomething, he yet knows not what, that may be of uſe and honour to his country. "This," ſays he, "is not to be obtained "but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit "that can enrich with all utterance and "knowledge, and ſends out his Seraphim "with the hallowed fire of his altar, to "touch and purify the lips of whom he

" pleaſes. To this muſt be added, induſtri-
" ous and ſelect reading, ſteady obſervation,
" and inſight into all ſeemly and generous
" arts and affairs; till which in ſome meaſure
" be compaſt, I refuſe not to ſuſtain this ex-
" pectation." From a promiſe like this, at once fervid, pious, and rational, might be expected the *Paradiſe Loſt*.

He publiſhed the ſame year two more pamphlets, upon the ſame queſtion. To one of his antagoniſts, who affirms that he was *vomited out of the univerſity*, he anſwers, in general terms; " The Fellows of the College
" wherein I ſpent ſome years, at my parting,
" after I had taken two degrees, as the man-
" ner is, ſignified many times how much
" better it would content that I ſhould ſtay.
" — As for the common approbation or
" diſlike of that place, as now it is, that I
" ſhould eſteem or diſeſteem myſelf the more
" for that, too ſimple is the anſwerer, if he
" think to obtain with me. Of ſmall prac-
" tice were the phyſician who could not
" judge, by what ſhe and her ſiſter have of
" long time vomited, that the worſer ſtuff
" ſhe ſtrongly keeps in her ſtomach, but the

"better ſhe is ever kecking at, and is queaſy;
"ſhe vomits now out of ſickneſs; but before
"it will be well with her, ſhe muſt vomit
"with ſtrong phyſick. The univerſity, in
"the time of her better health, and my
"younger judgement, I never greatly admired,
"but now much leſs."

This is ſurely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to deſcribe the courſe of his conduct, and the train of his thoughts; and, becauſe he has been ſuſpected of incontinence, gives an account of his own purity: "That if I be "juſtly charged," ſays he, "with this crime, "it may come upon me with tenfold ſhame."

The ſtyle of his piece is rough, and ſuch perhaps was that of his antagoniſt. This roughneſs he juſtifies, by great examples in a long digreſſion. Sometimes he tries to be humorous: "Leſt I ſhould take him for "ſome chaplain in hand, ſome ſquire of the "body to his prelate, one who ſerves not at "the altar only but at the Court-cupboard, "he will beſtow on us a pretty model of "himſelf; and ſets me out half a dozen

" ptifical mottoes, wherever he had them, " hopping ſhort in the meaſure of convulſion " fits; in which labour the agony of his wit " having ſcaped narrowly, inſtead of well- " ſized periods, he greets us with a quantity " of thumb-ring poſies.—And thus ends this " ſection, or rather diſſection of himſelf." Such is the controverſial merriment of Milton; his gloomy ſerioufneſs is yet more offenſive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown.*

His father, after Reading was taken by *Eſſex*, came to reſide in his houſe; and his ſchool increaſed. At Whitſuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powel, a juſtice of the peace in Oxfordſhire. He brought her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. The lady, however, ſeems not much to have delighted in the pleaſures of ſpare diet and hard ſtudy; for, as Philips relates, " having for a month led " a philoſophic life, after having been uſed " at home to a great houſe, and much com- " pany and joviality, her friends, poſſibly by " her own deſire, made earneſt ſuit to have

" her

"her company the remaining part of the "ſummer; which was granted, upon a pro- "miſe of her return at Michaelmas."

Milton was too buſy to much miſs his wife: he purſued his ſtudies; and now and then viſited the Lady Margaret Leigh, whom he has mentioned in one of his ſonnets. At laſt Michaelmas arrived; but the Lady had no inclination to return to the ſullen gloom of her huſband's habitation, and therefore very willingly forgot her promiſe. He ſent her a letter, but had no anſwer; he ſent more with the ſame ſucceſs. It could be alledged that letters miſcarry; he therefore diſpatched a meſſenger, being by this time too angry to go himſelf. His meſſenger was ſent back with ſome contempt. The family of the Lady were Cavaliers.

In a man whoſe opinion of his own merit was like Milton's, leſs provocation than this might have raiſed violent reſentment. Milton ſoon determined to repudiate her for diſobedience; and, being one of thoſe who could eaſily find arguments to juſtify inclination, publiſhed (in 1644) *The Doctrine and*

Diſcipline of Divorce; which was followed by *The Judgement of Martin Bucer, concerning Divorce*; and the next year, his Tetrachordon, *Expoſitions upon the four chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage.*

This innovation was oppoſed, as might be expected, by the clergy, who, then holding their famous aſſembly at Weſtminſter, procured that the author ſhould be called before the Lords; "but that Houſe," ſays Wood, "whether approving the doctrine, or not "favouring his accuſers, did ſoon diſmiſs "him."

There ſeems not to have been much written againſt him, nor any thing by any writer of eminence. The antagoniſt that appeared is ſtyled by him, *a Serving Man turned Solicitor*. *Howel* in his letters mentions the new doctrine with contempt; and it was, I ſuppoſe, thought more worthy of deriſion than of confutation. He complains of this neglect in two ſonnets, of which the firſt is contemptible, and the ſecond not excellent.

From

From this time it is obſerved that he became an enemy to the Preſbyterians, whom he had favoured before. He that changes his party by his humour is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his intereſt; he loves himſelf rather than truth.

His wife and her relations now found that Milton was not an unreſiſting ſufferer of injuries; and perceiving that he had begun to put his doctrine in practice, by courting a young woman of great accompliſhments, the daughter of one Doctor Davis, who was however not ready to comply, they reſolved to endeavour a re-union. He went ſometimes to the houſe of one Blackborough, his relation, in the lane of St. Martin's-le-Grand, and at one of his uſual viſits was ſurpriſed to ſee his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveneſs on her knees. He reſiſted her intreaties for a while: "but partly," ſays Philips, "his own generous nature, more "inclinable to reconciliation than to perſeve-"rance in anger or revenge, and partly the "ſtrong interceſſion of friends on both ſides, "ſoon brought him to an act of oblivion and "a firm

"a firm league of peace." It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own houſe, when they were diſtreſſed, with other Royaliſts.

He publiſhed about the ſame time his *Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr.* John Milton *for the liberty of unlicenſed Printing.* The danger of ſuch unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the ſcience of Government, which human underſtanding ſeems hitherto unable to ſolve. If nothing may be publiſhed but what civil authority ſhall have previouſly approved, power muſt always be the ſtandard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no ſettlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuſe diſcontent, there can be no peace; and if every ſceptick in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy againſt theſe evils is to puniſh the authors; for it is yet allowed that every ſociety may puniſh, though not prevent, the publication of opinions, which that ſociety ſhall think pernicious; but this puniſhment, though

though it may cruſh the author, promotes the book; and it ſeems not more reaſonable to leave the right of printing unreſtrained becauſe writers may be afterwards cenſured, than it would be to ſleep with doors unbolted, becauſe by our laws we can hang a thief.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or domeſtic, poetry was never long out of his thoughts.

About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and Engliſh poems appeared, in which the *Allegro* and *Penſeroſo*, with ſome others, were firſt publiſhed.

He had taken a larger houſe in Barbican for the reception of ſcholars; but the numerous relations of his wife, to whom he generouſly granted refuge for a while, occupied his rooms. In time, however, they went away; "and the houſe again," ſays Philips, "now looked like a houſe of the Muſes only, "though the acceſſion of ſcholars was not "great. Poſſibly his having proceeded ſo far "in the education of youth may have been "the occaſion of his adverſaries calling him "pe-

" pedagogue and ſchool-maſter; whereas it " is well known he never ſet up for a pub- " lick ſchool, to teach all the young fry of " a pariſh; but only was willing to impart " his learning and knowledge to his relations, " and the ſons of gentlemen who were his " intimate friends, and that neither his writ- " ings nor his way of teaching ſavoured in " the leaſt of pedantry."

Thus laborioufly does his nephew extenuate what cannot be denied, and what might be confeſſed without diſgrace. Milton was not a man who could become mean by a mean employment. This, however, his warmeſt friends ſeem not to have found; they therefore ſhift and palliate. He did not ſell literature to all comers at an open ſhop; he was a chamber-milliner, and meaſured his commodities to his friends.

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this ſtate of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raiſe his character again, has a mind to inveſt him with military ſplendour: " He is much " miſtaken," he ſays, " if there was not " about

"about this time a design of making him an "adjutant-general in Sir William Waller's "army. But the new-modelling of the "army proved an obstruction to the design." An event cannot be set at a much greater distance than by having been only *designed, about some time*, if a man *be not much mistaken.* Milton shall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much mistaken, somebody at some time designed him for a soldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645) he removed to a smaller house in Holbourn, which opened backward into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. He is not known to have published any thing afterwards till the King's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it, and *to compose the minds of the people.*

He made some *Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels.* While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions, and the gradual pre-

prevalence of opinions, firſt willingly admitted and then habitually indulged; if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and deſire ſuperinduced conviction; he yet ſhared only the common weakneſs of mankind, and might be no leſs ſincere than his opponents. But as faction ſeldom leaves a man honeſt, however it might find him, Milton is ſuſpected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Baſilike*, which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin ſecretary, employed him to cenſure, by inſerting a prayer taken from *Sidney's Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his *Iconoclaſtes*, with the uſe of this prayer, as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which proſperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to inſult all that is venerable or great: "Who "would have imagined ſo little fear in him "of the true all-ſeeing Deity—as, immediately before his death, to pop into the "hands of the grave biſhop that attended "him, as a ſpecial relique of his ſaintly exerciſes, a prayer ſtolen word for word from "the mouth of a heathen woman praying to "a heathen god?"

The

The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the ſcaffold, the regicides took away, ſo that they were at leaſt the publiſhers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch, who had examined the queſtion with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The uſe of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could ſo noiſily cenſure it, with a little extenſion of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuſe.

King Charles the Second, being now ſheltered in Holland, employed Salmaſius, profeſſor of Polite Learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his induſtry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuſes. Salmaſius was a man of ſkill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and ſagacity of emendatory criticiſm, almoſt exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by exceſſive praiſes, been confirmed in great confidence of himſelf, though he probably had not much conſidered the principles of ſociety or the rights of government, undertook the employment without diſtruſt of his own qualifications; and,

as

as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 publiſhed *Defenſio Regis.*

To this Milton was required to write a ſufficient anſwer; which he performed (1651) in ſuch a manner, that Hobbes declared himſelf unable to decide whoſe language was beſt, or whoſe arguments were worſt. In my opinion, Milton's periods are ſmoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himſelf with teazing his adverſary as much as with confuting him. He makes a fooliſh alluſion of Salmaſius, whoſe doctrine he conſiders as ſervile and unmanly, to the ſtream of *Salmacis*, which whoever entered left half his virility behind him. Salmaſius was a Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a ſcold. *Tu es Gallus*, ſays Milton, &, *ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus.* But his ſupreme pleaſure is to tax his adverſary, ſo renowned for criticiſm, with vitious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has uſed *Perſona*, which, according to Milton, ſignifies only a *Maſk*, in a ſenſe not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Perſon.* But as Nemeſis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a ſoleciſm

ſoleciſm by an expreſſion in itſelf groſſly ſoleciſtical, when for one of thoſe ſuppoſed blunders, he ſays, as *Ker*, and I think ſome one before him, has remarked, *propino te grammatiſtis tuis* vapulandum. From *vapulo*, which has a paſſive ſenſe, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, ſink into queſtions of grammar, if gramarians diſcuſs them.

Milton, when he undertook this anſwer, was weak of body and dim of ſight; but his will was forwarded, and what was wanting of health was ſupplied by zeal. He was rewarded with a thouſand pounds, and his book was much read; for paradox, recommended by ſpirit and elegance, eaſily gains attention; and he who told every man that he was equal to his King, could hardly want an audience.

That the performance of Salmaſius was not diſperſed with equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerneſs, is very credible. He taught only the ſtale doctrine of authority, and the unpleaſing duty of ſubmiſſion; and he had been ſo long not only the monarch but the

tyrant of literature, that almoſt all mankind were delighted to find him defied and inſulted by a new name, not yet conſidered as any one's rival. If Chriſtina, as is ſaid, commended the *Defence of the People*, her purpoſe muſt be to torment Salmaſius, who was then at her court; for neither her civil ſtation nor her natural character could diſpoſe them to favour the doctrine, who was by birth a queen, and by temper deſpotick.

That Salmaſius was, from the appearance of Milton's book, treated with neglect, there is not much proof; but to a man ſo long accuſtomed to admiration, a little praiſe of his antagoniſt would be ſufficiently offenſive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from which however he was diſmiſſed, not with any mark of contempt, but with a train of attendance ſcarcely leſs than regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imperfect, was publiſhed by his ſon in the year of the Reſtauration. In the beginning, being probably moſt in pain for his Latinity, he endeavours to defend his uſe of the word *perſonæ*; but, if I remember right, he miſſes

a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth ſatire:

—Quid agis cum dira & fœdior omni
Crimine *perſona* eſt?

As Salmaſius reproached Milton with loſing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himſelf with the belief that he had ſhortened Salmaſius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reaſon. Salmaſius died at the Spa, Sept. 3, 1653; and, as controvertiſts are commonly ſaid to be killed by their laſt diſpute, Milton was flattered with the credit of deſtroying him.

Cromwell had now diſmiſſed the parliament by the authority of which he had deſtroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himſelf, under the title of Protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himſelf founded his right only in neceſſity; but Milton, having now taſted the honey of publick employment, would not return to hunger and philoſophy, but, continuing to exerciſe his office under a manifeſt uſurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty

which he had defended. Nothing can be more juſt than that rebellion ſhould end in ſlavery; that he who had juſtified the murder of his king, for ſome acts which to him ſeemed unlawful, ſhould now ſell his ſervices, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

He had now been blind for ſome years; but his vigour of intellect was ſuch, that he was not diſabled to diſcharge his office of Latin ſecretary, or continue his controverſies. His mind was too eager to be diverted, and too ſtrong to be ſubdued.

About this time his firſt wife died in childbed, having left him three daughters. As he probably did not much love her, he did not long continue the appearance of lamenting her; but after a ſhort time married Catherine, the daughter of one captain Woodcock of Hackney; a woman doubtleſs educated in opinions like his own. She died, within a year, of childbirth, or ſome diſtemper that followed it; and her huſband honoured her memory with a poor ſonnet.

The

The firſt Reply to Milton's *Defenſio Populi* was publiſhed in 1651, called *Apologia pro Rege & Populo Anglicano, contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni) defenſionem deſtructivam Regis & Populi.* Of this the author was not known; but Milton and his nephew Philips, under whoſe name he publiſhed an anſwer ſo much corrected by him, that it might be called his own, imputed it to Bramhal; and, knowing him no friend to regicides, thought themſelves at liberty to treat him as if they had known what they only ſuſpected.

Next year appeared *Regii Sanguinis clamor ad Cœlum.* Of this the author was Peter du Moulin, who was afterwards prebendary of Canterbury; but Morus, or More, a French miniſter, having the care of its publication, was treated as the writer by Milton in his *Defenſio Secunda*, and overwhelmed by ſuch violence of invective, that he began to ſhrink under the tempeſt, and gave his perſecutors the means of knowing the true author. Du Moulin was now in great danger; but Milton's pride operated againſt his malignity;

and both he and his friends were more willing that Du Moulin ſhould eſcape than that he ſhould be convicted of miſtake.

In this ſecond Defence he ſhews that his eloquence is not merely ſatirical; the rudeneſs of his invective is equalled by the groſſneſs of his flattery. "Deſerimur, Cromuelle, "tu ſolus ſuperes, ad te ſumma noſtrarum "rerum rediit, in te ſolo conſiſtit, inſupera-"bili tuæ virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel "obloquente, niſi qui æquales inæqualis ipſe "honores ſibi quærit, aut digniori conceſſos "invidet, aut non intelligit nihil eſſe in ſo-"cietate hominum magis vel Deo gratum, "vel rationi conſentaneum, eſſe in civitate "nihil æquius, utilius, quam potiri rerum "digniſſimum. Eum te agnoſcunt omnes, "Cromuelle, ea tu civis maximus & * glo-"rioſiſſimus, dux publici conſilii, exercitum "fortiſſimorum imperator, pater patriæ geſ-"ſiſti. Sic tu ſpontanea bonorum omnium "& animitus miſſa voce ſalutaris."

* It may be doubted whether *glorioſiſſimus* be here uſed with Milton's boaſted purity. *Res glorioſa* is an *illuſtrious thing*; but *vir glorioſus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles glorioſus*. Dr. J.

Cæſar,

Cæſar, when he aſſumed the perpetual dictatorſhip, had not more ſervile or more elegant flattery. A tranſlation may ſhew its ſervility; but its elegance is leſs attainable. Having expoſed the unſkilfulneſs or ſelfiſhneſs of the former government, "We were left," ſays Milton, "to ourſelves: the whole na-"tional intereſt fell into your hands, and "ſubſiſts only in your abilities. To your "virtue, overpowering and reſiſtleſs, every "man gives way, except ſome who, with-"out equal qualifications, aſpire to equal ho-"nours, who envy the diſtinctions of merit "greater than their own, or who have yet "to learn, that in the coalition of human ſo-"ciety nothing is more pleaſing to God, or "more agreeable to reaſon, than that the "higheſt mind ſhould have the ſovereign "power. Such, Sir, are you by general "confeſſion; ſuch are the things atchieved "by you, the greateſt and moſt glorious of "our countrymen, the director of our pub-"lick councils, the leader of unconquered "armies, the father of your country; for by "that title does every good man hail you, "with ſincere and voluntary praiſe."

Next year, having defended all that wanted defence, he found leiſure to defend himſelf. He undertook his own vindication againſt More, whom he declares in his title to be juſtly called the author of the *Regii Sanguinis clamor*. In this there is no want of vehemence or eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted wit. "Morus es? an Momus? an "uterque idem eſt?" He then remembers that *Morus* is Latin for a Mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation;

—Poma alba ferebat
Quæ poſt nigra tulit Morus.

With this piece ended his controverſies: and he from this time gave himſelf up to his private ſtudies and his civil employment.

As ſecretary to the Protector he is ſuppoſed to have written the Declaration of the reaſons for a war with Spain. His agency was conſidered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully ſuſpended, the delay was publickly imputed to Mr. Milton's indiſpoſition; and the Swediſh agent was provoked to expreſs his wonder, that only

only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.

Being now forty-ſeven years old, and ſeeing himſelf diſencumbered from external interruptions, he ſeems to have recollected his former purpoſes, and to have reſumed three great works which he had planned for his future employment: an epick poem, the hiſtory of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

To collect a dictionary, ſeems a work of all others leaſt practicable in a ſtate of blindneſs, becauſe it depends upon perpetual and minute inſpection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it, after he had loſt his eyes; but having had it always before him, he continued it, ſays Philips, *almoſt to his dying-day; but the papers were ſo diſcompoſed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the preſs.* The compilers of the Latin dictionary, printed at Cambridge, had the uſe of thoſe collections in three folios; but what was their fate afterwards is not known *.

To

* The Cambridge Dictionary, publiſhed in 4to 1693, is no other than a copy, with ſome ſmall additions, of that

of

To compile a hiſtory from various authors, when they can only be conſulted by other eyes, is not eaſy, nor poſſible, but with more ſkilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of conſulting and comparing that ſtopped Milton's narrative at the Conqueſt; a period at which affairs were not yet very intricate, nor authors very numerous.

For the ſubject of his epick poem, after much deliberation, *long chuſing, and beginning*

of Dr. Adam Littleton in 1685, by fundry perſons, of whom, though their names are concealed, there is great reaſon to conjecture that Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, is one; for it is expreſsly ſaid by Wood, Faſti, vol. I. p. 266, that Milton's "Theſaurus" came to his hands; and it is aſſerted, in the preface thereto, that the editors thereof had the uſe of three large folios in manuſcript, collected and digeſted into alphabetical order by Mr. John Milton.

It has been remarked, that the additions, together with the preface abovementioned, and a large part of the title of the "Cambridge Dictionary," have been incorporated and printed with the ſubſequent editions of "Littleton's "Dictionary," till that of 1735. Vid. Biogr. Brit. 2985, in not. So that, for aught that appears to the contrary, Philips was the laſt poſſeſſor of Milton's MS. H.

late,

late, he fixed upon *Paradiſe Loſt*; a deſign ſo comprehenſive, that it could be juſtified only by ſucceſs. He had once deſigned to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verſes to Manſus; but *Arthur was reſerved*, ſays Fenton, *to another deſtiny* *.

It appears, by ſome ſketches of poetical projects left in manuſcript, and to be ſeen in a library † at Cambridge, that he had digeſted his thoughts on this ſubject into one of thoſe wild dramas which were anciently called Myſteries; and Philips had ſeen what he terms part of a tragedy, beginning with the firſt ten lines of Satan's addreſs to the Sun. Theſe myſteries conſiſt of allegorical perſons; ſuch as *Juſtice*, *Mercy*, *Faith*. Of the tragedy or myſtery of *Paradiſe Loſt* there are two plans:

* Id eſt, to be the ſubject of an heroic poem, written by Sir Richard Blackmore. H.

† Trinity College. R.

The

The Persons.

Michael.
Chorus of Angels.
Heavenly Love.
Lucifer.
Adam, } with the
Eve, } Serpent.
Conscience.
Death.
Labour,
Sickness,
Discontent, } Mutes.
Ignorance,
with others;
Faith.
Hope.
Charity.

The Persons.

Moses.
Divine Justice, Wisdom, Heavenly Love.
The Evening Star, Hesperus.
Chorus of Angels.
Lucifer.
Adam.
Eve.
Conscience.
Labour,
Sickness,
Discontent,
Ignorance, } Mutes.
Fear,
Death;
Faith
Hope.
Charity.

Paradise Lost.

The Persons.

Moses, προλογίζει, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not, because

becauſe it is with God in the mount; declares the like with Enoch and Elijah; beſides the purity of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preſerve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the ſight of God; tells they cannot ſee Adam in the ſtate of innocence, by reaſon of their ſin.

Juſtice,
Mercy,
Wiſdom, } debating what ſhould become of man, if he fall.

Chorus of Angels ſinging a hymn of the Creation.

ACT II.

Heavenly Love.

Evening Star.

Chorus ſing the marriage-ſong, and deſcribe Paradiſe.

ACT III.

Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin.

Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.

ACT IV.

Adam,
Eve, } fallen.

Conſcience cites them to God's examination.
Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has loſt.

ACT V.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradiſe.
——————— preſented by an angel with
Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, Peſtilence, Sickneſs, Diſcontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death, } Mutes.
To whom he gives their names. Likewiſe Winter, Heat, Tempeſt, &c.
Faith, Hope, Charity, } comfort him and inſtruct him.
Chorus briefly concludes.

Such was his firſt deſign, which could have produced only an allegory, or myſtery. The following ſketch ſeems to have attained more maturity.

Adam unparadiſed:

The angel Gabriel, either deſcending or entering; ſhewing, ſince this globe was created, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven; deſcribes Paradiſe. Next, the Chorus

rus, ſhewing the reaſon of his coming to keep his watch in Paradiſe, after Lucifer's rebellion, by command from God; and withal expreſſing his deſire to ſee and know more concerning this excellent new creature, man. The angel Gabriel, as by his name ſignifying a prince of power, tracing Paradiſe with a more free office, paſſes by the ſtation of the Chorus, and, deſired by them, relates what he knew of man; as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage. After this, Lucifer appears; after his overthrow bemoans himſelf, ſeeks revenge on man. The Chorus prepare reſiſtance at his firſt approach. At laſt, after diſcourſe of enmity on either ſide, he departs: whereat the Chorus ſings of the battle and victory in heaven, againſt him and his accomplices: as before, after the firſt act, was ſung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and inſulting in what he had done to the deſtruction of man. Man next, and Eve having by this time been ſeduced by the Serpent, appears confuſedly covered with leaves. Conſcience, in a ſhape, accuſes him; Juſtice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the mean while, the Chorus entertains the

the ſtage, and is informed by ſome angel the manner of the fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall; Adam then and Eve return; accuſe one another; but eſpecially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is ſtubborn in his offence. Juſtice appears, reaſons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admoniſhes Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. The angel is ſent to baniſh them out of Paradiſe; but before cauſes to paſs before his eyes, in ſhapes, a maſk of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, deſpairs; at laſt appears Mercy, comforts him, promiſes the Meſſiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity; inſtructs him; he repents, gives God the glory, ſubmits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes. Compare this with the former draught.

Theſe are very imperfect rudiments of *Paradiſe Loſt*; but it is pleaſant to ſee great works in their ſeminal ſtate, pregnant with latent poſſibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expanſion, and to obſerve how they are ſometimes

times ſuddenly advanced by accidental hints, and ſometimes ſlowly improved by ſteady meditation.

Invention is almoſt the only literary labour which blindneſs cannot obſtruct, and therefore he naturally ſolaced his ſolitude by the indulgence of his fancy, and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be neceſſarily previous to poetical excellence; he had made himſelf acquainted with *ſeemly arts and affairs*; his comprehenſion was extended by various knowledge, and his memory ſtored with intellectual treaſures. He was ſkilful in many languages, and had by reading and compoſition attained the full maſtery of his own. He would have wanted little help from books, had he retained the power of peruſing them.

But while his greater deſigns were advancing, having now, like many other authors, caught the love of publication, he amuſed himſelf, as he could, with little productions. He ſent to the preſs (1658) a manuſcript of Raleigh, called the *Cabinet Council*; and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy,

by a *Treatiſe of Civil Power in Eccleſiaſtical Caſes, and the Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church.*

Oliver was now dead; Richard was conſtrained to reſign: the ſyſtem of extemporary government, which had been held together only by force, naturally fell into fragments when that force was taken away; and Milton ſaw himſelf and his cauſe in equal danger. But he had ſtill hope of doing ſomething. He wrote letters, which Toland has publiſhed, to ſuch men as he thought friends to the new commonwealth: and even in the year of the Reſtoration he *bated no jot of heart or hope*, but was fantiſtical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be ſettled by a pamphlet, called *A ready and eaſy Way to eſtabliſh a Free Commonwealth*; which was, however, enough conſidered to be both ſeriouſly and ludicrouſly anſwered.

The obſtinate enthuſiaſm of the commonwealthmen was very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington, with a few aſſociates as fanatical as himſelf, uſed to meet, with all the gravity of political importance

importance, to ſettle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could ſtrike no longer, was fooliſh enough to publiſh, a few weeks before the Reſtoration, *Notes* upon a ſermon preached by one Griffiths, intituled, *The Fear of God and the King*. To theſe notes an anſwer was written by L'Eſtrange, in a pamphlet petulantly called *No Blind Guides*.

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be reſtored with the irreſiſtible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer ſecretary, and was conſequently obliged to quit the houſe which he held by his office; and proportioning his ſenſe of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to ſeek ſome ſhelter, and hid himſelf for a time in Bartholomew-Cloſe, by Weſt Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of reſpect, perhaps unconſciouſly, paid to this great man by his biographers: every houſe in which he reſided is hiſtorically mentioned, as if it were

an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his preſence.

The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs: and promiſed to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except thoſe whom the parliament ſhould except; and the parliament doomed none to capital puniſhment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only juſtified what they had done.

This juſtification was indeed ſufficiently offenſive; and (June 16) an order was iſſued to ſeize Milton's *Defence*, and Goodwin's *Obſtructors of Juſtice*, another book of the ſame tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to proſecute the authors; but Milton was not ſeized, nor perhaps very diligently purſued.

Not

Not long after (Auguſt 19) the flutter of innumerable boſoms was ſtilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather called an *Act of Oblivion* than of Grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any publick truſt; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderneſs ſhewn to Milton, the curioſity of mankind has not forborn to enquire the reaſon. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another inſtance which may confirm Dalrymple's obſervation, who ſays, "that whenever Burnet's narrations "are examined, he appears to be miſtaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his proſecution was ordered; it muſt be therefore by deſign that he was included in the general oblivion. He is ſaid to have had friends in the houſe, ſuch as Marvel, Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges; and undoubtedly a man like him muſt have had influence. A very particular ſtory of his eſcape is told by Richardſon in his Memoirs, which he received from Pope,

as delivered by Betterton, who might have heard it from Davenant. In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made priſoner and condemned to die; but was ſpared at the requeſt of Milton. When the turn of ſucceſs brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repayed the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generoſity and gratitude ſo pleaſing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his own relation; but of his eſcape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it ſeems not certain that Milton's life ever was in danger. Goodwin, who had committed the ſame kind of crime, eſcaped with incapacitation; and as excluſion from publick truſt is a puniſhment which the power of government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular law, it required no great intereſt to exempt Milton from a cenſure little more than verbal. Something may be reaſonably aſcribed to veneration and compaſſion;

paſſion; to veneration of his abilities, and compaſſion for his diſtreſſes, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and blind; and who would purſue with violence an illuſtrious enemy, depreſſed by fortune, and diſarmed by nature *?

The publication of the Act of Oblivion put him in the ſame condition with his fellow-ſubjects. He was, however, upon ſome pretence now not known, in the cuſtody of the ſerjeant in December; and, when he was releaſed, upon his refuſal of the fees demanded, he and the ſerjeant were called before the Houſe. He was now ſafe within the ſhade of oblivion, and knew himſelf to be as much out of the power of a griping officer, as any other man. How the queſtion

* A different account of the means by which Milton ſecured himſelf is given by an hiſtorian lately brought to light. "Milton, Latin ſecretary to Cromwell, diſtinguiſhed "by his writings in favour of the rights and liberties of "the people, pretended to be dead, and had a publick "funeral proceſſion. The King applauded his policy in "eſcaping the puniſhment of death, by a ſeaſonable ſhew "of dying." *Cunningham's Hiſtory of Great-Britain*, Vol. I. p. 14. R.

was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himfelf to have right on his ſide.

He then removed to Jewin-ſtreet, near Alderſgate-ſtreet; and being blind and by no means wealthy, wanted a domeſtick companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married Elizabeth Minſhul, of a gentleman's family in Cheſhire, probably without a fortune. All his wives were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it groſs and indelicate to be a ſecond huſband: upon what other principles his choice was made, cannot now be known; but marriage afforded not much of his happineſs. The firſt wife left him in diſguſt, and was brought back only by terror; the ſecond, indeed, ſeems to have been more a favourite, but her life was ſhort. The third, as Philips relates, oppreſſed his children in his life-time, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obſcure ſtory, he was offered the continuance of his employment, and being preſſed by his wife to accept it, anſwered, "You, like "other

"other women, want to ride in your coach; "my wiſh is to live and die an honeſt man." If he conſidered the Latin ſecretary as exerciſing any of the powers of government, he that had ſhared authority, either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly of his honeſty; and if he thought the office purely miniſterial, he certainly might have honeſtly retained it under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deſerve a diſquiſition; large offers and ſturdy rejections are among the common topicks of falſehood.

He had ſo much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to diſturb the new ſettlement with any of his political or eccleſiaſtical opinions, and from this time devoted himſelf to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning in all its parts, he gave a proof by publiſhing, the next year (1661), *Accidence commenced Grammar*; a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the ſupreme powers of his country, and was then writing *Paradiſe Loſt*, could deſcend from his elevation to reſcue children from the perplexity of grammatical

matical confuſion, and the trouble of leſſons unneceſſarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the quaker, being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him, for the advantage of his converſation, attended him every afternoon, except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib, had declared, that *to read Latin with an Engliſh mouth is as ill a hearing as Low French*, required that Elwood ſhould learn and practiſe the Italian pronunciation, which, he ſaid, was neceſſary, if he would talk with foreigners. This ſeems to have been a taſk troubleſome without uſe. There is little reaſon for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to teach it to an Engliſhman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he ſpeaks Latin, may ſo ſoon learn the ſounds which every native gives it, that he need make no proviſion before his journey; and if ſtrangers viſit us, it is their buſineſs to practiſe ſuch conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himſelf by his attendance,

dance, for he relates, that Milton, having a curious ear, knew by his voice when he read what he did not underſtand, and would ſtop him, and *open the moſt difficult paſſages.*

In a ſhort time he took a houſe in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the regiſter of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than any other.

He was now buſied by *Paradiſe Loſt.* Whence he drew the original deſign has been variouſly conjectured by men who cannot bear to think themſelves ignorant of that which, at laſt, neither diligence nor ſagacity can diſcover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthoriſed ſtory of a farce ſeen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be the Fiddleſtick of the Fiddle of Heaven.* It has been already ſhewn, that the firſt conception was a tragedy or myſtery, not of a narrative, but a dramatick work, which he is ſuppoſed to have begun to reduce to its preſent form about the time (1655) when he finiſhed

finiſhed his diſpute with the defenders of the king.

He long had promiſed to adorn his native country by ſome great performance, while he had yet perhaps no ſettled deſign, and was ſtimulated only by ſuch expectations as naturally aroſe from the ſurvey of his attainments, and the conſciouſneſs of his powers. What he ſhould undertake, it was difficult to determine. He was *long chuſing, and began late.*

While he was obliged to divide his time between his private ſtudies and affairs of ſtate, his poetical labour muſt have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little more in that buſy time than conſtruct the narrative, adjuſt the epiſodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and ſentiments, and treaſure in his memory, or preſerve in writing, ſuch hints as books or meditation would ſupply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a ſtateſman; for, having every help and accommodation at hand, he had no need of uncommon expedients.

Being

Being driven from all publick ſtations, he is yet too great not to be traced by curioſity to his retirement; where he has been found by Mr. Richardſon, the fondeſt of his admirers, ſitting *before his door in a grey coat of coarſe cloth, in warm ſultry weather, to enjoy the freſh air; and ſo, as in his own room, receiving the viſits of people of diſtinguiſhed parts as well as quality.* His viſitors of high quality muſt now be imagined to be few; but men of parts might reaſonably court the converſation of a man ſo generally illuſtrious, that foreigners are reported, by Wood, to have viſited the houſe in Bread-ſtreet where he was born.

According to another account, he was ſeen in a ſmall houſe, *neatly enough dreſſed in black cloaths, ſitting in a room hung with ruſty green; pale but not cadaverous, with chalkſtones in his hands. He ſaid, that if it were not for the gout, his blindneſs would be tolerable.*

In the intervals of his pain, being made unable to uſe the common exerciſes, he uſed

to ſwing in a chair, and ſometimes played upon an organ.

He was now confeſſedly and viſibly employed upon his poem, of which the progreſs might be noted by thoſe with whom he was familiar; for he was obliged, when he had compoſed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ ſome friend in writing them, having, at leaſt for part of the time, no regular attendant. This gave opportunity to obſervations and reports.

Mr. Philips obſerves, that there was a very remarkable circumſtance in the compoſure of *Paradiſe Loſt*, "which I have a particular "reaſon," ſays he, "to remember; for "whereas I had the peruſal of it from the "very beginning, for ſome years, as I went "from time to time to viſit him, in parcels "of ten, twenty, or thirty verſes at a time "(which, being written by whatever hand "came next, might poſſibly want correction "as to the orthography and pointing), having, "as the ſummer came on, not been ſhewed "any for a conſiderable while, and deſiring "the reaſon thereof, was anſwered, that his

"vein never happily flowed but from the "Autumnal Equinox to the Vernal; and "that whatever he attempted at other times "was never to his ſatisfaction, though he "courted his fancy never ſo much; ſo that, "in all the years he was about this poem, he "may be ſaid to have ſpent half his time "therein."

Upon this relation Toland remarks, that in his opinion Philips has miſtaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies, declares that with the advance of the Spring he feels the increaſe of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires.* To this it is anſwered, that Philips could hardly miſtake time ſo well marked; and it may be added, that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr. Richardſon conceives it impoſſible that *ſuch a work ſhould be ſuſpended for ſix months, or for one. It may go on faſter or ſlower, but it muſt go on.* By what neceſſity it muſt continually go on, or why it might not be laid aſide and reſumed, it is not eaſy to diſcover.

This

This dependance of the ſoul upon the ſeaſons, thoſe temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I ſuppoſe, juſtly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur aſtris.* The author that thinks himſelf weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore, that he is only idle or exhauſted. But while this notion has poſſeſſion of the head, it produces the inability which it ſuppoſes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *poſſunt quia poſſe videntur.* When ſucceſs ſeems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are ſuppreſſed by a croſs wind, or a cloudy ſky, the day is given up without reſiſtance; for who can contend with the courſe of Nature?

From ſuch prepoſſeſſions Milton ſeems not to have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was ſuſpected that the whole creation languiſhed, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predeceſſors, and that every

every thing was daily ſinking by gradual diminution *. Milton appears to ſuſpect that ſouls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without ſome fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late* for heroick poeſy.

Another opinion wanders about the world, and ſometimes finds reception among wiſe men; an opinion that reſtrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and ſuppoſes that a luckleſs mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wiſdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared leſt the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination.

* This opinion is, with great learning and ingenuity, refuted in a book now very little known, "An Apology or "Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the "Government of the World," by Dr. George Hakewill, London, folio, 1635. The firſt who ventured to propagate it in this country was Dr. Gabriel Goodman, biſhop of Glouceſter, a man of a verſatile temper, and the author of a book entituled, "The Fall of Man, or the Corruption "of Nature proved by natural Reaſon." Lond. 1616 and 1624, quarto. He was plundered in the Uſurpation, turned Roman Catholic, and died in obſcurity. Vide Athen. Oxon. vol. I. 727. H.

Into a mind already occupied by ſuch fancies, another not more reaſonable might eaſily find its way. He that could fear leſt his genius had fallen upon too old a world, or too chill a climate, might conſiſtently magnify to himſelf the influence of the ſeaſons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous only half the year.

His ſubmiſſion to the ſeaſons was at leaſt more reaſonable than his dread of decaying nature, or a frigid zone; for general cauſes muſt operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power; if leſs could be performed by the writer, leſs likewiſe would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of froſty grovellers he might ſtill have riſen into eminence by producing ſomething which *they ſhould not willingly let die.* However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might ſtill be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of poſterity. He might ſtill be a giant among the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of

Of his artifices of ſtudy, or particular hours of compoſition, we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardſon, who ſeems to have been very diligent in his enquiries, but diſcovers always a wiſh to find Milton diſcriminated from other men, relates, that "he would ſometimes lie awake whole nights, but not a verſe could he make; and on a ſudden his poetical faculty would ruſh upon him with an *impetus* or *æſtrum*, and his daughter was immediately called to ſecure what came. At other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

Theſe burſts of light, and involutions of darkneſs, theſe tranſient and involuntary excurſions and retroceſſions of invention, having ſome appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet ſomething of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity;

there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardſon's relation, caſually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to ſecure what came*, may be queſtioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is univerſally confeſſed, to have employed any caſual viſitor in diſburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The ſtory of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtleſs true of every fertile and copious mind, ſeems to have been gratuitouſly transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he compoſed much of his poem in the night and morning, I ſuppoſe before his mind was diſturbed with common buſineſs; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verſe*. Verſification, free, like his, from the diſtreſſes of rhyme, muſt, by a work ſo long, be made prompt

prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjuſted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book ſhews that he had loſt his ſight; and the Introduction to the ſeventh, that the return of the King had clouded him with diſcountenance; and that he was offended by the licentious feſtivity of the Reſtoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his diſloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection; but this, which, when he ſculked from the approach of his King, was perhaps more than he hoped, ſeems not to have ſatisfied him; for no ſooner is he ſafe, than he finds himſelf in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkneſs and with danger compaſs'd round.* This darkneſs, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deſerved compaſſion: but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjuſt. He

was fallen indeed on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boaſt their wickedneſs. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at leaſt equal to his other powers; Milton, whoſe warmeſt advocates muſt allow, that he never ſpared any aſperity of reproach or brutality of inſolence.

But the charge itſelf ſeems to be falſe; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach caſt upon him, either ſerious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He purſued his ſtudies or his amuſements, without perſecution, moleſtation, or inſult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however miſuſed: they who contemplated in Milton the ſcholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his King.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont in Bucks; where Elwood, who had taken the houſe for him, firſt ſaw a complete copy of *Paradiſe Loſt*, and, having peruſed it, ſaid to him, "Thou haſt ſaid a great deal upon *Paradiſe* "*Loſt*;

"*Loſt*; what haſt thou to ſay upon *Paradiſe* "*Found?*"

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceaſed, he returned to Bunhill-fields, and deſigned the publication of his poem. A licence was neceſſary, and he could expect no great kindneſs from a chaplain of the archbiſhop of Canterbury. He ſeems, however, to have been treated with tenderneſs; for though objections were made to particular paſſages, and among them to the ſimile of the ſun eclipſed in the firſt book, yet the licence was granted; and he ſold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons, for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a ſtipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred ſhould be ſold of the firſt edition: and again, five pounds after the ſale of the ſame number of the ſecond edition; and another five pounds after the ſame ſale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The firſt edition was ten books, in a ſmall quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertiſement and the argu-

ments of the books were omitted in ſome copies, and inſerted in others.

The ſale gave him in two years a right to his ſecond payment, for which the receipt was ſigned April 26, 1669. The ſecond edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in ſmall octavo; and the number of books was increaſed to twelve, by a diviſion of the ſeventh and twelfth; and ſome other ſmall improvements were made. The third edition was publiſhed in 1678; and the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, ſold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer ſold to Jacob Tonſon half, Auguſt 17, 1683, half, March 24, 1690, at a price conſiderably enlarged. In the hiſtory of *Paradiſe Loſt* a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue.

The ſlow ſale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and enquiries have been made, and

and conjectures offered, about the cauſes of its long obſcurity and late reception. But has the caſe been truly ſtated? Have not lamentation and wonder been laviſhed on an evil that was never felt?

That in the reigns of Charles and James the *Paradiſe Loſt* received no publick acclamations is readily confeſſed. Wit and literature were on the ſide of the Court: and who that ſolicited favour or faſhion would venture to praiſe the defender of the regicides? All that he himſelf could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential ſilence which was generouſly preſerved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.

The ſale, if it be conſidered, will juſtify the publick. Thoſe who have no power to judge of paſt times but by their own, ſhould always doubt their concluſions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is at preſent. To read was not then a general amuſement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themſelves diſgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aſpired

to literature, nor was every houſe ſupplied with a cloſet of knowledge. Thoſe, indeed, who profeſſed learning, were not leſs learned than at any other time; but of that middle race of ſtudents who read for pleaſure or accompliſhment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively ſmall. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be ſufficient to remark, that the nation had been ſatisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakſpeare, which probably did not together make one thouſand copies.

The ſale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in oppoſition to ſo much recent enmity, and to a ſtyle of verſification new to all and diſguſting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increaſe; for many more readers than were ſupplied at firſt the nation did not afford. Only three thouſand were ſold in eleven years; for it forced its way without aſſiſtance; its admirers did not dare to publiſh their opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting no-

tice by advertiſements were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy ſtill advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the ſecrecy of love, and *Paradiſe Loſt* broke into open view with ſufficient ſecurity of kind reception.

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton ſurveyed the ſilent progreſs of his work, and marked its reputation ſtealing its way in a kind of ſubterraneous current through fear and ſilence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little diſappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with ſteady conſciouſneſs, and waiting, without impatience, the viciſſitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his ſtudies, and ſupplied the want of ſight by a very odd expedient,

expedient, of which Philips gives the following account:

Mr. Philips tells us, "that though our "author had daily about him one or other to "read, ſome perſons of man's eſtate, who, "of their own accord, greedily catched at "the opportunity of being his readers, that "they might as well reap the benefit of what "they read to him, as oblige him by the "benefit of their reading; and others of "younger years were ſent by their parents "to the ſame end: yet excuſing only the "eldeſt daughter, by reaſon of her bodily in-"firmity, and difficult utterance of ſpeech, "(which, to ſay truth, I doubt was the "principal cauſe of excuſing her,) the other "two were condemned to the performance "of reading, and exactly pronouncing of all "the languages of whatever book he ſhould, "at one time or other, think fit to peruſe, "viz. the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), "the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spaniſh, "and French. All which ſorts of books to "be confined to read, without underſtanding "one word, muſt needs be a trial of patience "almoſt beyond endurance. Yet it was en-

"dured

"dured by both for a long time, though the "irkſomeneſs of this employment could not "be always concealed, but broke out more "and more into expreſſions of uneaſineſs; ſo "that at length they were all, even the "eldeſt alſo, ſent out to learn ſome curious "and ingenious ſorts of manufacture, that "are proper for women to learn; particularly "embroideries in gold or ſilver."

In this ſcene of miſery which this mode of intellectual labour ſets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are moſt to be lamented. A language not underſtood can never be ſo read as to give pleaſure, and very ſeldom ſo as to convey meaning. If few men would have had reſolution to write books with ſuch embarraſſments, few likewiſe would have wanted ability to find ſome better expedient.

Three years after his *Paradiſe Loſt* (1667), he publiſhed his *Hiſtory of England*, compriſing the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invaſion. Why he ſhould have given the firſt part, which he ſeems not to believe, and which is univerſally

ſally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The ſtyle is harſh; but it has ſomething of rough vigour, which perhaps may often ſtrike, though it cannot pleaſe.

On this hiſtory the licenſer again fixed his claws, and before he could tranſmit it to the preſs tore out ſeveral parts. Some cenſures of the Saxon monks were taken away, leſt they ſhould be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament, and Aſſembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the earl of Angleſea, and which being afterwards publiſhed, has been ſince inſerted in its proper place.

The ſame year were printed *Paradiſe Regained*, and *Sampſon Agoniſtes*, a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never deſigned by the author for the ſtage. As theſe poems were publiſhed by another bookſeller, it has been aſked, whether Simmons was diſcouraged from receiving them by the ſlow ſale of the former. Why a writer changed his bookſeller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to diſcover. Certainly, he

he who in two years ſells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reaſon to repent his purchaſe.

When Milton ſhewed *Paradiſe Regained* to Elwood, "This," ſaid he, "is owing to you; "for you put it in my head by the queſtion "you put to me at Chalfont, which other- "wiſe I had not thought of."

His laſt poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear *Paradiſe Loſt* preferred to *Paradiſe Regained*. Many cauſes may vitiate a writer's judgement of his own works. On that which has coſt him much labour he ſets a high value, becauſe he is unwilling to think that he has been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilſome efforts is conſidered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the laſt work, whatever it be, has neceſſarily moſt of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himſelf.

To

To that multiplicity of attainments, and extent of comprehenſion, that entitle this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not diſdain the meaneſt ſervices to literature. The epic poet, the controvertiſt, the politician, having already deſcended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the laſt years of his life, compoſed a book of Logick, for the initiation of ſtudents in philoſophy; and publiſhed (1672) *Artis Logicæ plenior Inſtitutio ad Petri Rami Methodum concinnata*; that is, "A new Scheme of Logick, "according to the Method of Ramus." I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hoſtility againſt the Univerſities; for Ramus was one of the firſt oppugners of the old philoſophy, who diſturbed with innovations the quiet of the ſchools.

His polemical diſpoſition again revived. He had now been ſafe ſo long, that he forgot his fears, and publiſhed a *Treatiſe of true Religion, Hereſy, Schiſm, Toleration, and the beſt Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.*

But

But this little tract is modeſtly written, with reſpectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the thirty-nine articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the ſufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profeſs to derive them from the ſacred books. The Papiſts appeal to other teſtimonies, and are therefore, in his opinion, not to be permitted the liberty of either publick or private worſhip; for though they plead conſcience, *we have no warrant*, he ſays, *to regard conſcience, which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Thoſe who are not convinced by his reaſons, may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman Catholick* is, he ſays, *one of the Pope's bulls; it is particular univerſal*, or *catholick ſchiſmatick.*

He has, however, ſomething better. As the beſt preſervative againſt Popery, he recommends the diligent peruſal of the Scriptures, a duty, from which he warns the

buſy part of mankind not to think themſelves excuſed.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems, with ſome additions.

In the laſt year of his life he ſent to the preſs, ſeeming to take delight in publication, a collection of Familiar Epiſtles in Latin; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added ſome academical exerciſes, which perhaps he peruſed with pleaſure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth; but for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his ſixty-ſixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died by a quiet and ſilent expiration, about the tenth of November 1674, at his houſe in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very ſplendidly and numerouſly attended.

Upon

Upon his grave there is ſuppoſed to have been no memorial; but in our time a monument has been erected in Weſtminſter-Abbey *To the Author of Paradiſe Loſt*, by Mr. Benſon, who has in the inſcription beſtowed more words upon himſelf than upon Milton.

When the inſcription for the monument of Philips, in which he was ſaid to be *ſoli Miltono ſecundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Weſtminſter, he refuſed to admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too deteſtable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury, who ſucceeded him, being author of the inſcription, permitted its reception. "And "ſuch has been the change of publick opi-"nion," ſaid Dr. Gregory, from whom I heard this account, "that I have ſeen erected "in the church a ſtatue of that man, whoſe "name I once knew conſidered as a pollution "of its walls."

Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, ſo as to have been called the Lady of his college.

His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the fore-top, and hung down upon his ſhoulders, according to the picture which he has given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroick ſtature, but rather below the middle ſize, according to Mr. Richardſon, who mentions him as having narrowly eſcaped from being *ſhort and thick.* He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exerciſe of the ſword, in which he is related to have been eminently ſkilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the back-ſword, of which he recommends the uſe in his book on Education.

His eyes are ſaid never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they muſt have been once quick.

His domeſtick habits, ſo far as they are known, were thoſe of a ſevere ſtudent. He drank little ſtrong drink of any kind, and fed without exceſs in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he ſtudied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and reſted in bed from nine to four in the ſummer, and five in

the

the winter. The courſe of his day was beſt known after he was blind. When he firſt roſe, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and then ſtudied till twelve; then took ſome exerciſe for an hour; then dined, then played on the organ, and ſung, or heard another ſing; then ſtudied to ſix; then entertained his viſitors till eight; then ſupped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glaſs of water, went to bed.

So is his life deſcribed; but this even tenour appears attainable only in Colleges. He that lives in the world will ſometimes have the ſucceſſion of his practice broken and confuſed. Viſitors, of whom Milton is repreſented to have had great numbers, will come and ſtay unſeaſonably; buſineſs, of which every man has ſome, muſt be done when others will do it.

When he did not care to riſe early, he had ſomething read to him by his bedſide; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He compoſed much in the morning, and dictated in the day, ſitting obliquely in

an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his perſonal eſtate to the parliament; but when, after the conteſt was decided, he ſolicited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but *ſharp rebuke*; and, having tired both himſelf and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeleſs indignation, till he ſhewed how able he was to do greater ſervice. He was then made Latin ſecretary, with two hundred pounds a year; and had a thouſand pounds for his *Defence of the People.* His widow, who, after his death, retired to Namptwich in Cheſhire, and died about 1729, is ſaid to have reported that he loſt two thouſand pounds by entruſting it to a ſcrivener; and that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he had graſped an eſtate of about ſixty pounds a year belonging to Weſtminſter-Abbey, which, like other ſharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return. Two thouſand pounds, which he had placed in the Exciſe-office, were alſo loſt. There is yet no reaſon to believe that he was ever

ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently ſupplied. He ſold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.

His literature was unqueſtionably great. He read all the languages which are conſidered either as learned or polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spaniſh. In Latin his ſkill was ſuch as places him in the firſt rank of writers and criticks; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who uſed to read to him, repreſented him as moſt delighting, after Homer, which he could almoſt repeat, were Ovid's Metamorphoſes and Euripides. His Euripides is, by Mr. Cradock's kindneſs, now in my hands: the margin is ſometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the Engliſh poets he ſet moſt value upon Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Cowley. Spenſer was apparently his favourite: Shakſpeare

he may eaſily be ſuppoſed to like, with every ſkilful reader; but I ſhould not have expected that Cowley, whoſe ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who ſometimes viſited him, was, that he was a good rhymiſt, but no poet.

His theological opinions are ſaid to have been firſt Calviniſtical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Preſbyterians, to have tended towards Arminianiſm. In the mixed queſtions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy; but what Baudius ſays of Eraſmus ſeems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod ſequeretur.* He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not aſſociated himſelf with any denomination of Proteſtants; we know rather what he was not than what he was. He was not of the Church of Rome; he was not of the Church of England.

To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are diſtant, and which

which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unleſs it be invigorated and reimpreſſed by external ordinances, by ſtated calls to worſhip, and the ſalutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had a full conviction of the truth of Chriſtianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundeſt veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occaſional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any viſible worſhip. In the diſtribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either ſolitary, or with his houſehold; omitting publick prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omiſſion the reaſon has been ſought, upon a ſuppoſition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and juſtify their conduct to themſelves. Prayer certainly was not thought ſuperfluous by him, who repreſents our firſt parents as praying acceptably in the ſtate of innocence, and efficaciouſly after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his

his ſtudies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himſelf, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were thoſe of an acrimonious and ſurly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reaſon than that *a popular government was the moſt frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would ſet up an ordinary commonwealth.* It is ſurely very ſhallow policy, that ſuppoſes money to be the chief good; and even this, without conſidering that the ſupport and expence of a Court is, for the moſt part, only a particular kind of traffick, for which money is circulated, without any national impoveriſhment.

Milton's republicaniſm was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatneſs, and a ſullen deſire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride diſdainful of ſuperiority. He hated monarchs in the ſtate, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey.

It

It is to be ſuſpected, that his predominant deſire was to deſtroy rather than eſtabliſh, and that he felt not ſo much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been obſerved, that they who moſt loudly clamour for liberty do not moſt liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domeſtic relations, is, that he was ſevere and arbitrary. His family conſiſted of women; and there appears in his books ſomething like a Turkiſh contempt of females, as ſubordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he ſuffered them to be depreſſed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family ſome account may be expected. His ſiſter, firſt married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married Mr. Agar, a friend of her firſt huſband, who ſucceeded him in the Crown-office. She had by her firſt huſband Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her ſecond, two daughters.

His brother, Sir Chriſtopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catherine *; and a ſon Thomas, who ſucceeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Groſvenor-ſtreet.

Milton had children only by his firſt wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a maſter-builder, and died of her firſt child. Mary died ſingle. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spital-fields, and lived ſeventy-ſix years, to Auguſt 1727. This is the daughter of whom publick mention has been made. She could repeat the firſt lines of Homer, the Metamorphoſes, and ſome of Euripides, by having often read them. Yet here incredulity is

* Both theſe perſons were living at Holloway about the year 1734, and at that time poſſeſſed ſuch a degree of health and ſtrength as enabled them on Sundays and Prayer-days to walk a mile up a ſteep hill to Highgate chapel. One of them was Ninety-two at the time of her death. Their parentage was known to few, and their names were corrupted into Melton. By the Crown-office mentioned in the two laſt paragraphs, we are to underſtand the Crown-office of the Court of Chancery. H.

ready

ready to make a ſtand. Many repetitions are neceſſary to fix in memory lines not underſtood; and why ſhould Milton wiſh or want to hear them ſo often? Theſe lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not underſtood, the beginning raiſes no more attention than the end; and as thoſe that underſtand it know commonly the beginning beſt, its rehearſal will ſeldom be neceſſary. It is not likely that Milton required any paſſage to be ſo much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he deſired the initial lines to be read at all; nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal ſounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addiſon made a preſent, and promiſed ſome eſtabliſhment; but died ſoon after. Queen Caroline ſent her fifty guineas. She had ſeven ſons and three daughters; but none of them had any children, except her ſon Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the Eaſt Indies, and had two ſons, of whom

whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foſter, a weaver in Spital-fields; and had ſeven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's ſhop, firſt at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harſhneſs to his daughters, and his refuſal to have them taught to write; and, in oppoſition to other accounts, repreſented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, *Comus* was played for her benefit. She had ſo little acquaintance with diverſion or gaiety, that ſhe did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonſon, a man who is to be praiſed as often as he is named. Of this ſum one hundred pounds were placed in the ſtocks, after ſome debate between her and her huſband in whoſe name it ſhould be entered; and the reſt augmented

their

their little ſtock, with which they removed to Iſlington. This was the greateſt benefaction that *Paradiſe Loſt* ever procured the author's deſcendents; and to this he, who has now attempted to relate his Life, had the honour of contributing a Prologue.

IN

IN the examination of Milton's poetical works, I ſhall pay ſo much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he ſeems to have had a degree of fondneſs not very laudable: what he has once written he reſolves to preſerve, and gives to the publick an unfiniſhed poem, which he broke off becauſe he was *nothing ſatisfied with what he had done*, ſuppoſing his readers leſs nice than himſelf. Theſe preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and Engliſh. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to ſpeak as a critick; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are luſciouſly elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquiſite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of ſentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excell the odes; and ſome of the exerciſes on Gunpowder Treaſon might have been ſpared.

The Engliſh poems, though they make no promiſes of *Paradiſe Loſt*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a caſt original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence; if they differ from verſes of others, they differ for the worſe; for they are too often diſtinguiſhed by repulſive harſhneſs; the combination of words are new, but they are not pleaſing; the rhymes and epithets ſeem to be laborioufly ſought, and violently applied.

That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuſcripts, happily preſerved at Cambridge, in which many of his ſmaller works are found as they were firſt written, with the ſubſequent corrections. Such reliques ſhew how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with eaſe, we muſt learn firſt to do with diligence.

Thoſe who admire the beauties of this great poet ſometimes force their own judgement into falſe approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themſelves to think that admirable which is only ſingular. All that ſhort

compoſitions can commonly attain is neatneſs and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of ſuavity and ſoftneſs; he was a *Lion* that had no ſkill *in dandling the Kid.*

One of the poems on which much praiſe has been beſtowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harſh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleaſing. What beauty there is we muſt therefore ſeek in the ſentiments and images. It is not to be conſidered as the effuſion of real paſſion; for paſſion runs not after remote alluſions and obſcure opinions. Paſſion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuſe and Mincius, nor tells of rough *ſatyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel.* Where there is leiſure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a paſtoral, eaſy, vulgar, and therefore diſguſting; whatever images it can ſupply are long age exhauſted; and its inherent improbability always forces diſſatisfaction on the mind.

When

When Cowley tells of Hervey, that they ſtudied together, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe how much he muſt miſs the companion of his labours, and the partner of his diſcoveries; but what image of tenderneſs can be excited by theſe lines!

> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the grey fly winds her ſultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the freſh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the repreſentation may be allegorical, the true meaning is ſo uncertain and remote, that it is never ſought becauſe it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copſes, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, ſuch as a College eaſily ſupplies. Nothing can leſs diſplay knowledge, or leſs exerciſe inventions, than to tell how a ſhepherd has loſt his companion, and muſt now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his ſkill in piping; and how one god aſks another god what is become of Ly-

cidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no ſympathy; he who thus praiſes will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a groſſer fault. With theſe trifling fictions are mingled the moſt awful and ſacred truths, ſuch as ought never to be polluted with ſuch irreverend combinations. The ſhepherd likewiſe is now a feeder of ſheep, and afterwards an eccleſiaſtical paſtor, a ſuperintendant of a Chriſtian flock. Such equivocations are always unſkilful; but here they are indecent, and at leaſt approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conſcious.

Such is the power of reputation juſtly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleaſure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penſeroſo*, I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleaſure. The author's deſign is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to ſhew how objects

jects derive their colours from the mind, by repreſenting the operation of the ſame things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the ſame man as he is differently diſpoſed; but rather how, among the ſucceſſive variety of appearances, every diſpoſition of mind takes hold on thoſe by which it may be gratified.

The *chearful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *penſive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *chearful* man ſees the cock ſtrut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks, *not unſeen*, to obſerve the glory of the riſing ſun, or liſten to the ſinging milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then caſts his eyes about him over ſcenes of ſmiling plenty, and looks up to the diſtant tower, the reſidence of ſome fair inhabitant; thus he purſues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himſelf at night with the fanciful narratives of ſuperſtitious ignorance.

The *penſive* man, at one time, walks *unſeen* to muſe at midnight; and at another hears

the ſullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he ſits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to diſcover the habitation of ſeparate ſouls, and varies the ſhades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic ſcenes of tragick and epick poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackleſs woods, falls aſleep by ſome murmuring water, and with melancholy enthuſiaſm expects ſome dream of prognoſtication, or ſome muſick played by aerial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are ſolitary, ſilent inhabitants of the breaſt, that neither receive nor tranſmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philoſophical friend, or a pleaſant companion. The ſerioufneſs does not ariſe from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleaſures of the bottle.

The man of *chearfulneſs*, having exhauſted the country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles with ſcenes of ſplendor gay aſſemblies and nuptial feſtivities; but he mingles

gles a mere ſpectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonſon, or the wild dramas of Shakſpeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *penſive* man never loſes himſelf in crowds, but walks the cloiſter, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forſaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in muſick; but he ſeems to think that chearful notes would have obtained from Pluto a complete diſmiſſion of Eurydice, of whom ſolemn ſounds only procured a conditional releaſe.

For the old age of Chearfulneſs he makes no proviſion; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the cloſe of life. His Chearfulneſs is without levity, and his Penſiveneſs without aſperity.

Through theſe two poems the images are properly ſelected, and nicely diſtinguiſhed; but the colours of the diction ſeem not ſufficiently diſcriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept ſufficiently apart. No

mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet ſome melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination *.

The greateſt of his juvenile performances is the *Maſk of Comus*, in which may very plainly be diſcovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradiſe Loſt*. Milton appears to have formed very early that ſyſtem of diction, and mode of verſe, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor deſired to deviate.

Nor does *Comus* afford only a ſpecimen of his language; it exhibits likewiſe his power of deſcription and his vigour of ſentiment,

* Mr. Warton intimates (and there can be little doubt of the truth of his conjecture) that Milton borrowed many of the images in theſe two fine poems from "Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," a book publiſhed in 1624, and at ſundry times ſince, abounding in learning, curious information, and pleaſantry. Mr. Warton ſays, that Milton appears to have been an attentive reader thereof; and to this aſſertion I add, of my own knowledge, that it was a book that Dr. Johnſon frequently reſorted to, as many others have done, for amuſement after the fatigue of ſtudy. H.

employed

employed in the praiſe and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; alluſions, images, and deſcriptive epithets, embelliſh almoſt every period with laviſh decoration. As a ſeries of lines, therefore, it may be conſidered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Maſque, in thoſe parts where ſupernatural intervention is admitted, muſt indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, ſo far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reaſonable, which can hardly be ſaid of the conduct of the two brothers; who, when their ſiſter ſinks with fatigue in a pathleſs wilderneſs, wander both away together in ſearch of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpleſs Lady to all the ſadneſs and danger of ſolitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deſerves more reprehenſion is, that the prologue ſpoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addreſſed to the audience; a mode

a mode of communication ſo contrary to the nature of dramatick repreſentation, that no precedents can ſupport it.

The diſcourſe of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almoſt all the following ſpeeches; they have not the ſpritelineſs of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but ſeem rather declamations deliberately compoſed, and formally repeated, on a moral queſtion. The auditor therefore liſtens as to a lecture, without paſſion, without anxiety.

The ſong of Comus has airineſs and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleaſure are ſo general, that they excite no diſtinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following ſoliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The ſong muſt owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At laſt the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared leſt their ſiſter ſhould be in danger,

and

and hoped that ſhe is not in danger, the Elder makes a ſpeech in praiſe of chaſtity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philoſopher.

Then deſcends the Spirit in form of a ſhepherd; and the Brother, inſtead of being in haſte to aſk his help, praiſes his ſinging, and enquires his buſineſs in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the brother is taken with a ſhort fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moraliſes again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no uſe becauſe it is falſe, and therefore unſuitable to a good Being.

In all theſe parts the language is poetical, and the ſentiments are generous; but there is ſomething wanting to allure attention.

The diſpute between the Lady and Comus is the moſt animated and affecting ſcene of the drama, and wants nothing but a briſker reciprocation of objections and replies to invite attention, and detain it.

The

The ſongs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harſh in their diction, and not very muſical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epick ſtyle, inelegantly ſplendid, and tediouſly inſtructive.

The *Sonnets* were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occaſions. They deſerve not any particular criticiſm; for of the beſt it can only be ſaid, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and twenty-firſt are truly entitled to this ſlender commendation. The fabrick of a ſonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never ſucceeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Thoſe little pieces may be diſpatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine *Paradiſe Loſt*; a poem, which, conſidered with reſpect to deſign, may claim the firſt place, and

with reſpect to performance, the ſecond, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general conſent of criticks, the firſt praiſe of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an aſſemblage of all the powers which are ſingly ſufficient for other compoſitions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleaſure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reaſon. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the moſt important truths by the moſt pleaſing precepts, and therefore relates ſome great event in the moſt affecting manner. Hiſtory muſt ſupply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he muſt improve and exalt by a nobler art, muſt animate by dramatick energy, and diverſify by retroſpection and anticipation; morality muſt teach him the exact bounds, and different ſhades, of vice and virtue; from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the diſcriminations of character, and the tendency of the paſſions, either ſingle or combined; and phyſiology muſt ſupply him with illuſtrations and images. To put theſe materials to poetical uſe, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction.

tion. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extenſion of his language, diſtinguiſhed all the delicacies of phraſe, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjuſt their different ſounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

Boſſu is of opinion that the poet's firſt work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh. This ſeems to have been the proceſs only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and conſequent; in Milton's only it is eſſential and intrinſick. His purpoſe was the moſt uſeful and the moſt arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to ſhew the reaſonableneſs of religion, and the neceſſity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there muſt be a *fable*, a narration artfully conſtructed, ſo as to excite curioſity, and ſurpriſe expectation. In this part of his work, Milton muſt be confeſſed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and thoſe that were to follow it: he has interwoven the

the whole ſyſtem of theology with ſuch propriety, that every part appears to be neceſſary; and ſcarcely any recital is wiſhed ſhorter for the ſake of quickening the progreſs of the main action.

The ſubject of an epick poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the deſtruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His ſubject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and of earth; rebellion, againſt the Supreme King, raiſed by the higheſt order of created beings; the overthrow of their hoſt, and the puniſhment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reaſonable creatures; their original happineſs and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their reſtoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be haſtened or retarded only by perſons of elevated dignity. Before the greatneſs diſplayed in Milton's poem, all other greatneſs ſhrinks away. The weakeſt of his agents are the higheſt and nobleſt of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whoſe actions the elements conſented;

ſented; on whoſe rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the ſtate of terreſtrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are ſuch as it is irreverence to name on ſlight occaſions. The reſt were lower powers;

——of which the leaſt could wield
Thoſe elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions;

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence reſtrains from laying creation waſte, and filling the vaſt expanſe of ſpace with ruin and confuſion. To diſplay the motives and actions of beings thus ſuperiour, ſo far as human reaſon can examine them, or human imagination repreſent them, is the taſk which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much ſpeculation is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, which admit of examination, are thoſe of

of angels and of man; of angels good and evil; of man in his innocent and ſinful ſtate.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of eaſy condeſcenſion and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may ſeem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occaſionally, and act as every incident requires; the ſolitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diverſified. To Satan, as Addiſon obſerves, ſuch ſentiments are given as ſuit *the moſt exalted and moſt depraved being*. Milton has been cenſured by Clarke*, for the impiety which ſometimes breaks from Satan's mouth. For there are thoughts, as he juſtly remarks, which no obſervation of character can juſtify, becauſe no good man would willingly permit them to paſs, however tranſiently, through his own mind. To make Satan ſpeak as a rebel, without any ſuch expreſſions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed

* Author of the "Eſſay on Study." Dr. J.

one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himſelf with great happineſs. There is in Satan's ſpeeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the ſame with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtineſs and obſtinacy; but his expreſſions are commonly general, and no otherwiſe offenſive than as they are wicked.

The other chiefs of the celeſtial rebellion are very judiciouſly diſcriminated in the firſt and ſecond books; and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council with exact conſiſtency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, ſuch ſentiments as innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual veneration; their repaſts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addreſſes to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to aſk; and Innocence left them nothing to fear.

But

But with guilt enter diſtruſt and diſcord, mutual accuſation, and ſtubborn ſelf-defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their tranſgreſſion. At laſt they ſeek ſhelter in his mercy, ſoften to repentance, and melt in ſupplication. Both before and after the Fall, the ſuperiority of Adam is diligently ſuſtained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epick poem, which immerge the critick in deep conſideration, the *Paradiſe Loſt* requires little to be ſaid. It contains the hiſtory of a miracle, of Creation and Redemption; it diſplays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The ſubſtance of the narrative is truth; and as truth allows no choice, it is, like neceſſity, ſuperior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, ſome ſlight exceptions may be made. But the main fabrick is immovably ſupported.

It is juſtly remarked by Addiſon, that this poem has, by the nature of its ſubject, the advantage above all others, that it is univerſally and perpetually intereſting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the ſame relation to Adam and to Eve, and muſt partake of that good and evil which extend to themſelves.

Of the *machinery*, ſo called from Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occaſional interpoſition of ſupernatural power, another fertile topick of critical remarks, here is no room to ſpeak, becauſe every thing is done under the immediate and viſible direction of Heaven; but the rule is ſo far obſerved, that no part of the action could have been accompliſhed by any other means.

Of *epiſodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetic account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are cloſely connected with the great action; one was neceſſary to Adam as a warning, the other as a conſolation.

To

To the compleatneſs or *integrity* of the deſign nothing can be objected; it has diſtinctly and clearly what Ariſtotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the ſame length, from which ſo little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long deſcription of a ſhield. The ſhort digreſſions at the beginning of the third, ſeventh, and ninth books, might doubtleſs be ſpared; but ſuperfluities ſo beautiful, who would take away? or who does not wiſh that the author of the *Iliad* had gratified ſucceeding ages with a little knowledge of himſelf? Perhaps no paſſages are more frequently or more attentively read than thoſe extrinſic paragraphs; and, ſince the end of poetry is pleaſure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleaſed.

The queſtions, whether the action of the poem be ſtrictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raiſed by ſuch readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reaſon. Milton, though he inti-

tuled *Paradiſe Loſt* only a *poem*, yet calls it himſelf *heroick ſong*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroiſm of Adam, becauſe he was overcome; but there is no reaſon why the hero ſhould not be unfortunate, except eſtabliſhed practice, ſince ſucceſs and virtue do not go neceſſarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be ſuffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if ſucceſs be neceſſary, Adam's deceiver was at laſt cruſhed; Adam was reſtored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may ſecurely reſume his human rank.

After the ſcheme and fabrick of the poem, muſt be conſidered its component parts, the ſentiments and the diction.

The *ſentiments*, as expreſſive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably juſt.

Splendid paſſages, containing leſſons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur ſeldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little aſſiſtance

to

to human conduct. Its end is to raiſe the thoughts above ſublunary cares or pleaſures. Yet the praiſe of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his ſingularity of virtue againſt the ſcorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curioſity after the planetary motions, with the anſwer returned by Adam, may be confidently oppoſed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occaſionally called forth in the progreſs, are ſuch as could only be produced by an imagination in the higheſt degree fervid and active, to which materials were ſupplied by inceſſant ſtudy and unlimited curioſity. The heat of Milton's mind might be ſaid to ſublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the ſpirit of ſcience, unmingled with its groſſer parts.

He had conſidered creation in its whole extent, and his deſcriptions are therefore learned. He had accuſtomed his imagination to unreſtrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extenſive. The characteriſtick quality of his poem is ſublimity. He ſome-

times deſcends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occaſionally inveſt himſelf with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftineſs *. He can pleaſe when pleaſure is required; but it is his peculiar power to aſtoniſh.

He ſeems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had beſtowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of diſplaying the vaſt, illuminating the ſplendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful; he therefore choſe a ſubject on which too much could not be ſaid, on which he might tire his fancy without the cenſure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not ſatiate his appetite of greatneſs. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to ſport in the wide regions of poſſibility; reality was a ſcene too narrow for his mind. He ſent his faculties out upon diſcovery, into worlds where only imagina-

* Algarotti terms it *giganteſca ſublimità Miltoniana*. Dr. J.

tion

tion can travel, and delighted to form new modes of exiſtence, and furniſh ſentiment and action to ſuperior beings, to trace the counſels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds; he muſt ſometimes reviſit earth, and tell of things viſible and known. When he cannot raiſe wonder by the ſublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his ſubject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and deſcriptions of the ſcenes or operations of Nature do not ſeem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freſhneſs, racineſs, and energy of immediate obſervation. He ſaw Nature, as Dryden expreſſes it, *through the ſpectacles of books*; and on moſt occaſions calls learning to his aſſiſtance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of *Enna*, where Proſerpine was gathering flowers. Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulyſſes* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools, when he ſhunned *Charybdis* on the *larboard*. The mythological alluſions have been juſtly cen-

cenſured, as not being always uſed with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exerciſe of the memory and the fancy.

His ſimilies are leſs numerous, and more various, than thoſe of his predeceſſors. But he does not confine himſelf within the limits of rigorous compariſon: his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimenſions which the occaſion required. Thus comparing the ſhield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crowds the imagination with the diſcovery of the teleſcope, and all the wonders which the teleſcope diſcovers.

Of his moral ſentiments it is hardly praiſe to affirm that they excel thoſe of all other poets; for this ſuperiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the ſacred writings. The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unſkilful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may riſe from their works with a greater degree

degree of active or paſſive fortitude, and ſometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of juſtice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Chriſtian knowledge may be poſſeſſed in vain. Arioſto's pravity is generally known; and though the *Deliverance of Jeruſalem* may be conſidered as a ſacred ſubject, the poet has been very ſparing of moral inſtruction.

In Milton every line breathes ſanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious ſpirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their ſubjection to God, in ſuch a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but thoſe two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and ſubmiſſion. In their firſt ſtate their affection is tender without weakneſs, and their piety ſublime

ſublime without preſumption. When they have ſinned, they ſhew how diſcord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to ceaſe in mutual forbearance, how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by ſin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A ſtate of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our preſent miſery, it be poſſible to conceive it; but the ſentiments and worſhip proper to a fallen and offending Being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practiſe.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors, in their firſt ſtate, converſed with angels; even when folly and ſin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean ſuitors*; and they riſe again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human paſſions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the *Paradiſe Loſt* little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not been loſt. That paſſion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguiſh ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of tranſgreſſion,

greſſion, and the horrors attending the ſenſe of the Divine Diſpleaſure, are very juſtly deſcribed and forcibly impreſſed. But the paſſions are moved only on one occaſion; ſublimity is the general and prevailing quality of this poem; ſublimity variouſly modified, ſometimes deſcriptive, ſometimes argumentative.

The defects and faults of *Paradiſe Loſt*, for faults and defects every work of man muſt have, it is the buſineſs of impartial criticiſm to diſcover. As, in diſplaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, becauſe of ſelecting beauties there had been no end, I ſhall in the ſame general manner mention that which ſeems to deſerve cenſure; for what Engliſhman can take delight in tranſcribing paſſages, which, if they leſſen the reputation of Milton, diminiſh in ſome degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my ſcheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley, perhaps better ſkilled in grammar than poetry, has often found, though he ſometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtruſions of a reviſer, whom the author's blindneſs obliged him to employ;

employ; a ſuppoſition raſh and groundleſs, if he thought it true, and vile and pernicious, if, as is ſaid, he in private allowed it to be falſe.

The plan of *Paradiſe Loſt* has this inconvenience, that it compriſes neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and ſuffer, are in a ſtate which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no tranſaction in which he can by any effort of imagination place himſelf; he has, therefore, little natural curioſity or ſympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's diſobedience; we all ſin like Adam, and like him muſt all bewail our offences; we have reſtleſs and inſidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the bleſſed ſpirits we have guardians and friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included; in the deſcription of heaven and hell we are ſurely intereſted, as we are all to reſide hereafter either in the regions of horrour or bliſs.

But

But theſe truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our ſolitary thoughts and familiar converſation, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raiſe no unaccuſtomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot ſurpriſe.

Of the ideas ſuggeſted by theſe awful ſcenes, from ſome we recede with reverence, except when ſtated hours require their aſſociation; and from others we ſhrink with horrour, or admit them only as ſalutary inflictions, as counterpoiſes to our intereſts and paſſions. Such images rather obſtruct the career of fancy than incite it.

Pleaſure and terrour are indeed the genuine ſources of poetry; but poetical pleaſure muſt be ſuch as human imagination can at leaſt conceive, and poetical terrours ſuch as human ſtrength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind ſinks under

them in paſſive helpleſſneſs, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

Known truths, however, may take a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himſelf. Whoever conſiders the few radical poſitions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetic operation he expanded them to ſuch extent, and ramified them to ſo much variety, reſtrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiouſneſs of fiction.

Here is a full diſplay of the united force of ſtudy and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digeſt, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to ſelect from nature, or from ſtory, from an ancient fable, or from modern ſcience, whatever could illuſtrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by ſtudy, and exalted by imagination.

It has been therefore ſaid, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiaſts, that in reading *Paradiſe Loſt* we read a book of univerſal knowledge.

But original deficience cannot be ſupplied. The want of human intereſt is always felt. *Paradiſe Loſt* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wiſhed it longer than it is. Its peruſal is a duty rather than a pleaſure. We read Milton for inſtruction, retire harraſſed, and overburdened, and look elſewhere for recreation; we deſert our maſter, and ſeek for companions.

Another inconvenience of Milton's deſign is, that it requires the deſcription of what cannot be deſcribed, the agency of ſpirits. He ſaw that immateriality ſupplied no images, and that he could not ſhow angels acting but by inſtruments of action; he therefore inveſted them with form and matter. This, being neceſſary, was therefore defenſible; and he ſhould have ſecured the conſiſtency of his ſyſtem, by keeping immateriality

out of ſight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philoſophy. His infernal and celeſtial powers are ſometimes pure ſpirit, and ſometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*, he has a body; when, in his paſſage between hell and the new world, he is in danger of ſinking in the vacuity, and is ſupported by a guſt of riſing vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he ſeems to be mere ſpirit, that can penetrate matter at pleaſure; when he *ſtarts up in his own ſhape*, he has at leaſt a determined form; and when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a ſpear and a ſhield*, which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal ſpirits*, are *at large, though without number*, in a limited ſpace: yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *cruſhed in upon their ſubſtance, now grown groſs by ſinning*. This likewiſe happened to the uncorrupted

rupted angels, who were overthrown the *ſooner for their arms, for unarmed they might eaſily as ſpirits have evaded by contraction or remove.* Even as ſpirits they are hardly ſpiritual; for *contraction* and *remove* are images of matter; but if they could have eſcaped without their armour, they might have eſcaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel, when he rides on a ſun-beam, is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the proweſs of Adam.

The confuſion of ſpirit and matter, which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven, fills it with incongruity; and the book, in which it is related, is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increaſed.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be conſidered that of allegorical perſons, which have no real exiſtence. To exalt cauſes into agents, to inveſt abſtract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But ſuch airy beings are, for the moſt part, ſuffered only to do

their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a ſtandard; but Fame and Victory can do more. To give them any real employment, or aſcribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to ſhock the mind by aſcribing effects to non-entity. In the *Prometheus* of Æſchylus, we ſee *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the *Alceſtis* of Euripides, we ſee *Death*, brought upon the ſtage, all as active perſons of the drama; but no precedents can juſtify abſurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portreſs of hell; but when they ſtop the journey of Satan, a journey deſcribed as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death ſhould have ſhewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the paſſage by building a bridge, becauſe the difficulty of Satan's paſſage is deſcribed as real and ſenſible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell aſſigned to the rebel-

lious ſpirits is deſcribed as not leſs local than the reſidence of man. It is placed in ſome diſtant part of ſpace, ſeparated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotick waſte and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole* of *aggravated ſoil*, cemented with *aſphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unſkilful allegory appears to me one of the greateſt faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative ſome objection may be made. Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in Paradiſe, and is ſuffered to go away unmoleſted. The creation of man is repreſented as the conſequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulſion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *riſe in heaven* before his departure.

To find ſentiments for the ſtate of innocence, was very difficult; and ſomething of anticipation perhaps is now and then diſco-

vered. Adam's diſcourſe of dreams ſeems not to be the ſpeculation of a new-created being. I know not whether his anſwer to the angel's reproof for curioſity does not want ſomething of propriety; it is the ſpeech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philoſophical notions, eſpecially when the philoſophy is falſe, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a compariſon, ſpeaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could underſtand the compariſon.

Dryden remarks, that Milton has ſome flats among his elevations. This is only to ſay, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part muſt be for the ſake of others; a palace muſt have paſſages; a poem muſt have tranſitions. It is no more to be required that wit ſhould always be blazing, than that the ſun ſhould always ſtand at noon. In a great work there is a viciſſitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a ſucceſſion of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the ſky, may be allowed ſometimes to reviſit earth; for what other author ever ſoared ſo high, or ſuſtained his flight ſo long?

Milton,

Milton, being well verſed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches ſomething from his companions, his deſire of imitating Arioſto's levity has diſgraced his work with the *Paradiſe of Fools*; a fiction not in itſelf ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.

His play on words, in which he delights too often; his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unneceſſary and ungraceful uſe of terms of art; it is not neceſſary to mention, becauſe they are eaſily remarked, and generally cenſured, and at laſt bear ſo little proportion to the whole, that they ſcarcely deſerve the attention of a critick.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance *Paradiſe Loſt*; which he who can put in balance with its beauties muſt be conſidered not as nice but as dull, as leſs to be cenſured for want of candour, than pitied for want of ſenſibility.

Of *Paradiſe Regained*, the general judgement ſeems now to be right, that it is in many parts elegant, and every-where inſtructive. It was not to be ſuppoſed that the writer of *Paradiſe Loſt* could ever write without great effuſions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wiſdom. The baſis of *Paradiſe Regained* is narrow; a dialogue without action can never pleaſe like an union of the narrative and dramatic powers. Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by ſome imitator, it would have claimed and received univerſal praiſe.

If *Paradiſe Regained* has been too much depreciated, *Sampſon Agoniſtes* has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and Engliſh ſtages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praiſed in which the intermediate parts have neither cauſe nor conſequence, neither haſten nor retard the cataſtrophe.

In

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many juſt ſentiments and ſtriking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramatic writing; he knew human nature only in the groſs, and had never ſtudied the ſhades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending paſſions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience muſt confer.

Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and caſt of expreſſion which bears little reſemblance to that of any former writer, and which is ſo far removed from common uſe, that an unlearned reader, when he firſt opens his book, finds himſelf ſurpriſed by a new language.

This

This novelty has been, by thoſe who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words ſuitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, ſays Addiſon, *ſunk under him.* But the truth is, that, both in proſe and verſe, he had formed his ſtyle by a perverſe and pedantic principle. He was deſirous to uſe Engliſh words with a foreign idiom. This in all his proſe is diſcovered and condemned; for there judgement operates freely, neither ſoftened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but ſuch is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without reſiſtance, the reader feels himſelf in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticiſm ſinks in admiration.

Milton's ſtyle was not modified by his ſubject; what is ſhown with greater extent in *Paradiſe Loſt*, may be found in *Comus*. One ſource of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuſcan poets; the diſpoſition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps ſometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at laſt, may be ſaid what Jonſon ſays of

of Spenſer, that *he wrote no language*, but has formed what *Butler* calls a *Babyloniſh Dialect*, in itſelf harſh and barbarous, but made, by exalted genius and extenſive learning, the vehicle of ſo much inſtruction and ſo much pleaſure, that like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praiſe of copiouſneſs and variety: he was maſter of his language in its full extent; and has ſelected the melodious words with ſuch diligence, that from his book alone the Art of Engliſh Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, ſomething muſt be ſaid of his *verſification*. The *meaſure*, he ſays, *is the Engliſh heroick verſe without rhyme*. Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and ſome in his own country. The Earl of Surrey is ſaid to have tranſlated one of Virgil's books without rhyme; and, beſides our tragedies, a few ſhort poems had appeared in blank verſe, particularly one tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana, and probably written

by Raleigh himſelf. Theſe petty performances cannot be ſuppoſed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Triſſino's *Italia Liberata*; and, finding blank verſe eaſier than rhyme, was deſirous of perſuading himſelf that it is better.

Rhyme, he ſays, and ſays truly, *is no neceſſary adjunct of true poetry*. But, perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre or muſick is no neceſſary adjunct: it is however by the muſick of metre that poetry has been diſcriminated in all languages; and, in languages melodiouſly conſtructed with a due proportion of long and ſhort ſyllables, metre is ſufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is ſcanty and imperfect, ſome help is neceſſary. The muſick of the Engliſh heroick line ſtrikes the ear ſo faintly, that it is eaſily loſt, unleſs all the ſyllables of every line co-operate together; this co-operation can be only obtained by the preſervation of every verſe unmingled with another as a diſtinct ſyſtem of ſounds; and this diſtinctneſs is obtained and preſerved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauſes, ſo much boaſted by the

the lovers of blank verſe, changes the meaſures of an Engliſh poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verſe*, ſaid an ingenious critick, *ſeems to be verſe only to the eye.*

Poetry may ſubſiſt without rhyme, but Engliſh poetry will not often pleaſe; nor can rhyme ever be ſafely ſpared but where the ſubject is able to ſupport itſelf. Blank verſe makes ſome approach to that which is called the *lapidary ſtyle*; has neither the eaſineſs of proſe, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alledges as precedents, not one is popular; what reaſon could urge in its defence has been confuted by the ear.

But, whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myſelf to wiſh that Milton had been a rhymer; for I cannot wiſh his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated.

imitated. He that thinks himſelf capable of aſtoniſhing may write blank verſe; but thoſe that hope only to pleaſe muſt condeſcend to rhyme.

The higheſt praiſe of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be ſaid to have contrived the ſtructure of an epick poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations muſt be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interpoſition of dialogue, and all the ſtratagems that ſurpriſe and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the leaſt indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himſelf, confident of his own abilities, and diſdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuſe admiſſion to the thoughts or images of his predeceſſors, but he did not ſeek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received ſupport; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praiſe, nor ſolicitation of ſupport.

port. His great works were performed under diſcountenance, and in blindneſs, but difficulties vaniſhed at his touch; he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greateſt of heroick poems, only becauſe it is not the firſt.

BUTLER.

OF the great author of Hudibras there is a life prefixed to the latter editions of his poem, by an unknown writer, and therefore of diſputable authority; and ſome account is incidentally given by Wood, who confeſſes the uncertainty of his own narrative; more however than they knew cannot now be learned, and nothing remains but to compare and copy them.

SAMUEL BUTLER was born in the pariſh of Strenſham in Worceſterſhire, according to his biographer, in 1612. This account Dr. Naſh finds confirmed by the regiſter. He was chriſtened Feb. 14.

His father's condition is variouſly repreſented. Wood mentions him as competently weal-

wealthy; but Mr. Longueville, the ſon of Butler's principal friend, ſays he was an honeſt farmer with ſome ſmall eſtate, who made a ſhift to educate his ſon at the grammar ſchool of Worceſter, under Mr. Henry Bright *, from whoſe care he removed for a ſhort

* Theſe are the words of the author of the ſhort account of Butler prefixed to Hudibras, which Dr. Johnſon, notwithſtanding what he ſays above, ſeems to have ſuppoſed was written by Mr. Longueville, the father; but the contrary is to be inferred from a ſubſequent paſſage, wherein the author laments that he had neither ſuch an acquaintance nor intereſt with Mr. Longueville as to procure from him the golden remains of Butler there mentioned. He was probably led into this miſtake by a note in the Biog. Brit. p. 1077, ſignifying, that the ſon of this gentleman was living in 1736.

Of this friend and generous patron of Butler, Mr. William Longueville, I find an account, written by a perſon who was well acquainted with him, to this effect, viz. that he was a conveyancing lawyer, and a bencher of the Inner Temple, and had raiſed himſelf from a low beginning to very great eminence in that profeſſion; that he was eloquent, and learned, of ſpotleſs integrity; that he ſupported an aged father who had ruined his fortunes by extravagance, and by his induſtry and application re-edified a ruined family; that he ſupported Butler, who, but for him, muſt literally have ſtarved, and received from him as a recom-

ſhort time to Cambridge; but, for want of money, was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford; but at laſt makes him paſs ſix or ſeven years at Cambridge, without knowing in what hall or college: yet it can hardly be imagined that he lived ſo long in either univerſity, but as belonging to one houſe or another; and it is ſtill leſs likely that he could have ſo long inhabited a place of learning with ſo little diſtinction as to leave his reſidence uncertain. Dr. Naſh has diſcovered that his father was owner of a houſe and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, ſtill called *Butler's tenement*.

Wood has his information from his brother, whoſe narrative placed him at Cambridge, in oppoſition to that of his neighbours, which ſent him to Oxford. The brother's ſeems the beſt authority, till, by confeſſing his inability

pence the papers called his Remains. Life of the Lord-keeper Guilford, p. 289. Theſe have ſince been given to the public by Mr. Thyer of Mancheſter; and the originals are now in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Farmer, maſter of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. H.

to

to tell his hall or college, he gives reaſon to ſuſpect that he was reſolved to beſtow on him an academical education; but durſt not name a college, for fear of a detection.

He was for ſome time, according to the author of his Life, clerk to Mr. Jeffery's of Earl's Croomb in Worceſterſhire, an eminent juſtice of the peace. In his ſervice he had not only leiſure for ſtudy, but for recreation: his amuſements were muſick and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendſhip of the celebrated Cooper. Some pictures, ſaid to be his, were ſhewn to Dr. Naſh, at Earl's Croomb; but, when he enquired for them ſome years afterwards, he found them deſtroyed, to ſtop windows, and owns that they hardly deſerved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Counteſs of Kent, where he had the uſe of a library; and ſo much recommended himſelf to Selden, that he was often employed by him in literary buſineſs. Selden, as is well known, was ſteward to the Counteſs, and is ſuppoſed to have gained much of his wealth by managing her eſtate.

In what character Butler was admitted into that Lady's ſervice, how long he continued in it, and why he left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The viciſſitudes of his condition placed him afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's officers. Here he obſerved ſo much of the character of the ſectaries, that he is ſaid to have written or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely that ſuch a deſign would be formed in a place where he ſaw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undiſguiſed in the confidence of ſucceſs.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made ſecretary to the Earl of Carbury, preſident of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the ſtewardſhip of Ludlow Caſtle, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family;

and lived, ſays Wood, upon her fortune, having ſtudied the common law, but never practiſed it. A fortune ſhe had, ſays his biographer, but it was loſt by bad ſecurities.

In 1663 was publiſhed the firſt part, containing three cantos, of the poem of Hudibras, which, as Prior relates, was made known at Court by the taſte and influence of the Earl of Dorſet. When it was known, it was neceſſarily admired: the king quoted, the courtiers ſtudied, and the whole party of the royaliſts applauded it. Every eye watched for the golden ſhower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.

In 1664 the ſecond part appeared; the curioſity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praiſed and elated. But praiſe was his whole reward. Clarendon, ſays Wood, gave him reaſon to hope for "places and employments of value and credit;" but no ſuch advantages did he ever obtain. It is reported that the King once gave him three hundred guineas; but of this temporary bounty I find no proof.

Wood relates that he was ſecretary to Villiers Duke of Buckingham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this is doubted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to have been his frequent benefactor. That both theſe accounts are falſe there is reaſon to ſuſpect, from a ſtory told by Packe, in his account of the Life of Wycherley; and from ſome verſes which Mr. Thyer has publiſhed in the author's Remains.

"Mr. Wycherley," ſays Packe, "had al-
"ways laid hold of an opportunity which
"offered of repreſenting to the Duke of
"Buckingham how well Mr. Butler had de-
"ſerved of the royal family, by writing his
"inimitable Hudibras; and that it was a
"reproach to the Court, that a perſon of his
"loyalty and wit ſhould ſuffer in obſcurity,
"and under the wants he did. The duke
"always ſeemed to hearken to him with at-
"tention enough; and after ſome time un-
"dertook to recommend his pretenſions to
"his Majeſty. Mr. Wycherley, in hopes to
"keep him ſteady to his word, obtained of
"his Grace to name a day, when he might
"in-

"introduce that modeſt and unfortunate poet "to his new patron. At laſt an appoint- "ment was made, and the place of meeting "was agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. But- "ler and his friend attended accordingly: "the Duke joined them; but, as the d——l "would have it, the door of the room where "they ſat was open, and his Grace, who "had ſeated himſelf near it, obſerving a "pimp of his acquaintance (the creature too "was a knight) trip by with a brace of La- "dies, immediately quitted his engagement, "to follow another kind of buſineſs, at "which he was more ready than in doing "good offices to men of deſert; though no "one was better qualified than he, both in "regard to his fortune and underſtanding, "to protect them, and, from that time to "the day of his death, poor Butler never "found the leaſt effect of his promiſe!"

Such is the ſtory. The verſes are written with a degree of acrimony, ſuch as neglect and diſappointment might naturally excite; and ſuch as it would be hard to imagine Butler capable of expreſſing againſt a man who had any claim to his gratitude.

Notwithſtanding this diſcouragement and neglect, he ſtill proſecuted his deſign; and in 1678 publiſhed the third part, which ſtill leaves the poem imperfect and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events the action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought ſtrange that he ſhould ſtop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is ſufficiently unpleaſing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it proper to be in jeſt no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville, having unſucceſsfully ſolicited a ſubſcription for his interment in Weſtminſter Abbey, buried him at his own coſt in the churchyard of Covent Garden*. Dr. Simon Patrick read the ſervice.

* In a note in the "Biographia Britannica," p. 1075, he is ſaid, on the authority of the younger Mr. Longueville, to have lived for ſome years in Roſe Street, Covent Garden, and alſo that he died there; the latter of theſe particulars is rendered highly probable, by his being interred in the cemetry of that pariſh. H.

Granger

Granger was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr. Lowndes of the treaſury, that Butler had an yearly penſion of an hundred pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham, and by the reproaches of Dryden; and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About ſixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London, and a friend to Butler's principles, beſtowed on him a monument in Weſtminſter Abbey, thus inſcribed:

M. S.
SAMUELIS BUTLERI,
Qui *Strenſhamiæ* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612,
obiit *Lond.* 1680.
Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;
Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, fœlix:
Satyrici apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;
Quo ſimulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,
Et Perduellium ſcelera liberrime exagitavit;
Scriptorum in ſuo genere, Primus & Poſtremus.
Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,
Deeſſet etiam mortuo Tumulus,
Hoc tandem poſito marmore, curavit
JOHANNIS BARBER, Civis *Londinenſis*, 1721.

After

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous works: I know not by whom collected, or by what authority ascertained *; and, lately, two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester, indubitably genuine. From none of these pieces can his life be traced, or his character discovered. Some verses, in the last collection, shew him to have been among those who ridiculed the institution of the Royal Society, of which the enemies were for some time very numerous and very acrimonious, for what reason it is hard to conceive, since the philosophers professed not to advance doctrines, but to produce facts; and the most zealous enemy of innovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may oppose hypothetical temerity.

In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

* They were collected into one, and published in 12mo 1732. H.

THE

THE poem of Hudibras is one of thoſe compoſitions of which a nation may juſtly boaſt; as the images which it exhibits are domeſtic, the ſentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the ſtrain of diction original and peculiar. We muſt not, however, ſuffer the pride, which we aſſume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon juſtice, nor appropriate thoſe honours which others have a right to ſhare. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly Engliſh; the original idea is to be found in the hiſtory of Don Quixote; a book to which a mind of the greateſt powers may be indebted without diſgrace.

Cervantes ſhews a man, who having, by the inceſſant peruſal of incredible tales, ſubjected his underſtanding to his imagination, and familiariſed his mind by pertinacious meditations to trains of incredible events and ſcenes of impoſſible exiſtence, goes out in the pride of knighthood to redreſs wrongs, and defend virgins, to reſcue captive princeſſes, and tumble uſurpers from their thrones; attended

tended by a ſquire, whoſe cunning, too low for the ſuſpicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his maſter.

The hero of Butler is a Preſbyterian Juſtice, who in the confidence of legal authority and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repreſs ſuperſtition and correct abuſes, accompanied by an Independent Clerk, diſputatious and obſtinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had ſo much kindneſs for Don Quixote, that, however he embarraſſes him with abſurd diſtreſſes, he gives him ſo much ſenſe and virtue as may preſerve our eſteem; wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchleſs dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderneſs; he chuſes not that any pity ſhould be ſhewn or reſpect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and deſcribing his perſon and habiliments, the author ſeems to labour with a tumultuous confuſion of diſſimilar ideas. He had read the hiſtory of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a Preſbyterian magiſtrate, and tried to unite the abſurdities of both, however diſtant, in one perſonage. Thus he gives him that pedantic oſtentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He ſends him out a *colonelling*, and yet never brings him within ſight of war.

If Hudibras be conſidered as the repreſentative of the Preſbyterians, it is not eaſy to ſay why his weapons ſhould be repreſented as ridiculous or uſeleſs; for, whatever judgement might be paſſed upon their knowledge or their arguments, experience had ſufficiently ſhown that their ſwords were not to be diſpiſed.

The hero, thus compounded of ſwaggerer and pedant, of knight and juſtice, is led forth

to

to action, with his ſquire Ralpho, an Independent Enthuſiaſt.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, ſince it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckleſs adventures, which would give occaſion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*, to expoſe the ridiculous rigour of the ſectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum, to make ſuperſtition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourſe to the low retailer of the law, diſcover the fraudulent practices of different profeſſions.

What ſeries of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or puniſhed his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work muſt have had, as it ſeems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenſer; the action could not have been one; thoſe could only have been a ſucceſſion of incidents, each of which might have happened without the reſt, and which could not all co-operate to any ſingle concluſion.

The

The diſcontinuity of the action might however have been eaſily forgiven, if there had been action enough: but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of Hudibras, as in the hiſtory of Thucydides, there is more ſaid than done. The ſcenes are too ſeldom changed, and the attention is tired with long converſation.

It is indeed much more eaſy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every poſition makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an anſwer. When two diſputants are engaged upon a complicated and extenſive queſtion, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controverſy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the poſſibilities of life, or that life itſelf affords little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will coſt to form ſuch a combination of circumſtances as ſhall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reaſon.

Per-

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it by quicker reciprocation, by ſeaſonable interruptions, by ſudden queſtions, and by a nearer approach to dramatic ſpritelineſs; without which, fictitious ſpeeches will always tire, however ſparkling with ſentences, and however variegated with alluſions.

The great ſource of pleaſure is variety. Uniformity muſt tire at laſt, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is diſappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the preſent, whoever would pleaſe muſt make proviſion. The ſkilful writer *irritat*, *mulcet*, makes a due diſtribution of the ſtill and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and thoſe neceſſary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praiſed.

If unexhauſtible wit could give perpetual pleaſure, no eye would ever leave half-read the

the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought ſo many remote images ſo happily together? It is ſcarcely poſſible to peruſe a page without finding ſome aſſociation of images that was never found before. By the firſt paragraph the reader is amuſed, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more ſtrained to aſtoniſhment; but aſtoniſhment is a toilſome pleaſure; he is ſoon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

Omnia vult belle Matho dicere, dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.

Imagination is uſeleſs without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unleſs ſtudy and obſervation ſupply materials to be combined. Butler's treaſures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topic employs his mind, he ſhews himſelf qualified to expand and illuſtrate it with all the acceſſaries that books can furniſh: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken general ſurveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inſpection.

If the French boaſt the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the moſt violent parts of his performance are thoſe which retired ſtudy and native wit cannot ſupply. He that merely makes a book from books may be uſeful, but can ſcarcely be great. Butler had not ſuffered life to glide beſide him unſeen or unobſerved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, intereſt, and paſſion. From ſuch remarks proceeded that great number of ſententious diſtichs which have paſſed into converſation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general ſtock of practical knowledge.

When any work has been viewed and admired, the firſt queſtion of intelligent curioſity is, how was it performed? Hudibras was not a haſty effuſion; it was not produced by a ſudden tumult of imagination, or a ſhort paroxyſm of violent labour. To accumulate ſuch a maſs of ſentiments at the call of acci-

dental

dental deſire, or of ſudden neceſſity, is beyond the reach and power of the moſt active and comprehenſive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer of Mancheſter, the excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could ſhew ſomething like Hudibras in proſe. He has in his poſſeſſion the common-place book, in which Butler repoſited, not ſuch events or precepts as are gathered by reading, but ſuch remarks, ſimilitudes, alluſions, aſſemblages, or inferences, as occaſion prompted, or meditation produced, thoſe thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be uſefully applied to ſome future purpoſe. Such is the labour of thoſe who write for immortality.

But human works are not eaſily found without a periſhable part. Of the ancient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppreſſive. Of Hudibras, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day leſs intelligible, and leſs ſtriking. What Cicero ſays of philoſophy is true likewiſe of wit and humour, that "time effaces the fictions of "opinion, and confirms the determinations

"of Nature." Such manners as depend upon ſtanding relations and general paſſions are co-extended with the race of man; but thoſe modifications of life, and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverſeneſs, or at beſt of ſome accidental influence or tranſient perſuaſion, muſt periſh with their parents.

Much therefore of that humour which tranſported the century with merriment is loſt to us, who do not know the ſour ſolemnity, the ſullen ſuperſtition, the gloomy moroſeneſs, and the ſtubborn ſcruples, of the ancient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and ſtudy underſtand the lines in which they are ſatyriſed. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.

It is ſcarcely poſſible, in the regularity and compoſure of the preſent time, to image the tumult of abſurdity, and clamour of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, diſordered prac-

practice, and disturbed both public and private quiet, in that age when subordination was broken, and he was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator who could hatch a half-formed notion produced it to the publick; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wisdom of the nation is very reasonably supposed to reside in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower classes of the people, when in one of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell it was seriously proposed, that all the records in the Tower should be burnt, that all memory of things past should be effaced, and that the whole system of life should commence anew?

We have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of mince pies and plumb-porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan, who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake

his cheer, told him, that, if he would treat him at an alehouſe with beer, brewed for all times and ſeaſons, he ſhould accept his kindneſs, but would have none of his ſuperſtitious meats and drinks.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker upon *Lots* may ſee how much learning and reaſon one of the firſt ſcholars of his age thought neceſſary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a dye, or play at cards, or to hide a ſhilling for the reckoning.

Aſtrology, however, againſt which ſo much of the ſatire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans than of others. It had in that time a very extenſive dominion. Its predictions raiſed hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and when the king was priſoner in Cariſbrook Caſtle, an aſtrologer was conſulted what hour would be found moſt favourable to an eſcape.

What effect this poem had upon the publick, whether it ſhamed impoſture, or reclaimed credulity, is not eaſily determined. Cheats can ſeldom ſtand long againſt laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore faſt away; though ſome men of knowledge, and Dryden among them, continued to believe that conjunctions and oppoſitions had a great part in the diſtribution of good or evil, and in the government of ſublunary things.

Poetical Action ought to be probable upon certain ſuppoſitions, and ſuch probability as burleſque requires is here violated only by one incident. Nothing can ſhew more plainly the neceſſity of doing ſomething, and the difficulty of finding ſomething to do, than that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the flagellation of Sancho, not the moſt agreeable fiction of Cervantes; very ſuitable indeed to the manners of that age and nation, which aſcribed wonderful efficacy to voluntary penances; but ſo remote from the practice nd opinions of the Hudibraſtic time, that judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The diction of this poem is groſſly familiar, and the numbers purpoſely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts by their native excellence ſecure themſelves from violation, being ſuch as mean language cannot expreſs. The mode of verſification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroic meaſure was not rather choſen. To the critical ſentence of Dryden the higheſt reverence would be due, were not his deciſions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wiſhed to change the meaſure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were heroic, the diction ſhould ſtill remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural compoſition. If he preferred a general ſtatelineſs both of ſound and words, he can be only underſtood to wiſh Butler had undertaken a different work.

The meaſure is quick, ſpritely, and colloquial, ſuitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the ſentiments. But ſuch numbers and ſuch diction can gain regard only when they are uſed by a writer whoſe vigour

vigour of fancy and copiouſneſs of knowledge entitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and juſtneſs of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in careleſs verſification, it will only be ſaid, "Pauper "videri Cinna vult, & eſt pauper." The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticiſm may juſtly doom them to periſh together.

Nor even though another Butler ſhould ariſe, would another Hudibras obtain the ſame regard. Burleſque conſiſts in a diſproportion between the ſtyle and the ſentiments, or between the adventitious ſentiments and the fundamental ſubject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All diſproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleaſure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a ſtrange thing; but when it is no longer ſtrange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequenc

repetition detects itſelf; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the ſpectator turns away from a ſecond exhibition of thoſe tricks, of which the only uſe is to ſhew, that they can be played.

ROCHES;

ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rocheſter, the ſon of Henry Earl of Rocheſter, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot, ſo often mentioned in Clarendon's Hiſtory, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordſhire. After a grammatical education at the ſchool of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College in 1659, only twelve years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with ſome other perſons of high rank, made maſter of arts by Lord Clarendon in perſon.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at his return, devoted himſelf to the Court. In 1665 he went to ſea with Sandwich, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Bergen

gen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next ſummer ſerved again on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a meſſage of reproof to ſend to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in an open boat, went and returned amidſt the ſtorm of ſhot.

But his reputation for bravery was not laſting; he was reproached with ſlinking away in ſtreet quarrels, and leaving his companions to ſhift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a ſtory of his refuſal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally ſubdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himſelf to diſſolute and vitious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He loſt all ſenſe of religious reſtraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was reſolved not to obey, ſheltered his wickedneſs behind infidelity.

As

As he excelled in that noiſy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in exceſs, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confeſſed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or ſo much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be maſter of himſelf.

In this ſtate he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we ſhould remember, and which are not now diſtinctly known. He often purſued low amours in mean diſguiſes, and always acted with great exactneſs and dexterity the characters which he aſſumed.

He once erected a ſtage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made phyſick part of his ſtudy, is ſaid to have practiſed it ſucceſsfully.

He was ſo much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodſtock Park.

Having

Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study: he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one-and-thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet, to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the courſe of his life, and from whom he received ſuch conviction of the reaſonableneſs of moral duty, and the truth of Chriſtianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of thoſe ſalutary conſequences is given by Burnet in a book, intituled, *Some Paſſages of the Life and Death of* John *Earl of* Rocheſter, which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philoſopher for its arguments, and the ſaint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year; and was ſo worn away by a long illneſs, that life went out without a ſtruggle.

Lord Rocheſter was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and ſallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffuſed itſelf upon his writings; the compoſitions of a man

a man whoſe name was heard ſo often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applauſe. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguiſhed; and his poetry ſtill retains ſome ſplendour beyond that which genius has beſtowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reaſon to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineneſs was aſcertained. The firſt edition was publiſhed in the year of his death, with an air of concealment, profeſſing in the title-page to be printed at *Antwerp*.

Of ſome of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The Imitation of Horace's Satire, the Verſes to Lord Mulgrave, the Satire againſt Man, the Verſes upon *Nothing*, and perhaps ſome others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps moſt of thoſe which this collection exhibits.

As he cannot be ſuppoſed to have found leiſure for any courſe of continued ſtudy, his pieces

pieces are commonly ſhort, ſuch as one fit of reſolution would produce.

His ſongs have no particular character; they tell, like other ſongs, in ſmooth and eaſy language, of ſcorn and kindneſs, diſmiſſion and deſertion, abſence and inconſtancy, with the common places of artificial courtſhip. They are commonly ſmooth and eaſy; but have little nature, and little ſentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has ſince been very frequent, of ancient poetry to preſent times; and perhaps few will be found where the paralleliſm is better preſerved than in this. The verſification is indeed ſometimes careleſs, but it is ſometimes vigorous and weighty.

The ſtrongeſt effort of his Muſe is his poem upon *Nothing*. He is not the firſt who has choſen this barren topick for the boaſt of his fertility. There is a poem called *Nihil* in Latin by *Paſſerat*, a poet and critick of the ſixteenth century in France; who, in his

own epitaph, expreſſes his zeal for good poetry thus:

—Molliter oſſa quieſcent
Sint modo carminibus non onerata malis.

His works are not common, and therefore I ſhall ſubjoin his verſes.

In examining this performance, *Nothing* muſt be conſidered as having not only a negative but a kind of poſitive ſignification; as I need not fear thieves, I have *nothing*, and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the firſt part of the ſentence it is taken negatively; in the ſecond it is taken poſitively, as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a queſtion, whether he ſhould uſe *à rien faire*, or *à ne rien faire*; and the firſt was preferred becauſe it gave *rien* a ſenſe in ſome ſort poſitive. *Nothing* can be a ſubject only in its poſitive ſenſe, and ſuch a ſenſe is given it in the firſt line:

Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to ſhade.

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious book *de Umbra*, by Wowerus, which, having told the qualities of

of *Shade*, concludes with a poem, in which are theſe lines:

Jam primum terram validis circumſpice clauſtris
Suſpenſam totam, decus admirabile mundi
Terraſque tractuſque maris, campoſque liquentes
Aeris & vaſti laqueata palatia cœli——
Omnibus UMBRA prior.

The poſitive ſenſe is generally preſerved, with great ſkill, through the whole poem; though ſometimes in a ſubordinate ſenſe, the negative *nothing* is injudiciouſly mingled. Paſſerat confounds the two ſenſes.

Another of his moſt vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop, who, in a poem called *The Praiſe of Satire*, had ſome lines like theſe *:

He who can puſh into a midnight fray
His brave companion, and then run away,
Leaving him to be murder'd in the ſtreet,
Then put it off with ſome buffoon conceit:
Him, thus diſhonour'd, for a wit you own,
And court him as top fidler of the town.

This was meant of Rocheſter, whoſe *buffoon conceit* was, I ſuppoſe, a ſaying often

* I quote from memory. Dr. J.

mentioned, that *every Man would be a coward if he durſt*; and drew from him thoſe furious verſes; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with theſe lines:

Thou canſt hurt no man's fame with thy ill word;
Thy pen is full as harmleſs as thy ſword.

Of the ſatire againſt *Man*, Rocheſter can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away.

In all his works there is ſpritelineſs and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which ſtudy might have carried to excellence. What more can be expected from a life ſpent in oſtentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be diſplayed?

Poema Cl. V. Joannis Passeratii,

Regii in Academia Parisiensi Professoris,

Ad ornatissimum virum Erricum Memmium.

Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ,
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis.
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?
Usque adeò ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?
Quod nusquam est, potius nova per vestigia quæram.
Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes
Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus.
Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius auro.
Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos;
Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,
Ausonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,
Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Camœnæ.
E cœlo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,
Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis
Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.
Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.
Quòd si hinc majestas et vis divina probatur,
Num quid honore deûm, num quid dignabimur aris?
Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almæ,
Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,
Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura;
In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tumultu:

Juſtum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL eſt in fœdere tutum.
Felix cui NIHIL eſt, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)
Non timet inſidias; fures, incendia temnit:
Sollicitas ſequitur nullo ſub judice lites.
Ille ipſe invictis qui ſubjicit omnia fatis
Zenonis ſapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.
Socraticique gregis fuit iſta ſcientia quondam,
Scire NIHIL, ſtudio cui nunc incumbitur uni.
Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didiciſſe juventus,
Ad magnas quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.
Noſce NIHIL, noſces fertur quod Pythagoreæ
Grano hærere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.
Multi Mercurio freti duce viſcera terræ
Pura liquefaciunt ſimul, & patrimonia miſcent,
Arcano inſtantes operi, & carbonibus atris,
Qui tandem exhauſti damnis, fractique labore,
Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL uſque requirunt,
Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda poſſit:
Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ:
Et Phœbo ignotum NIHIL eſt, NIHIL altius aſtris,
Túque, tibi licet eximium ſit mentis acumen,
Omnem in naturam penetrans, et in abdita rerum,
Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidêris.
Sole tamen NIHIL eſt, & puro clarius igne.
Tange NIHIL, diceſque NIHIL ſine corpore tangi.
Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL abſque colore.
Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL ſine voce, volatque
Abſque ope pennarum, & graditur ſine cruribus ullis.
Abſque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.

Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi.
Ne rhombos igitur, neu Theſſala murmura tentet
Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,
Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vetrice gramen.
Vulneribus ſævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.
Vexerit & quemvis trans mœſtas portitor undas,
Ad ſuperos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.
Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,
Parcarûmque colos, & inexorabile penſum.
Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes
Fulmineo ſenſit NIHIL eſſe potentius ictu:
Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi:
Diique NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura
Commemorem? virtute NIHIL præſtantius ipſa,
Splendidius NIHIL eſt; NIHIL eſt Jove denique majus.
Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis:
Ne tibi ſi multa laudem mea carmina charta,
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant faſtidia verſus.

ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, earl of Roſcommon, was the ſon of James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, ſiſter to the earl of Strafford. He was born in Ireland during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being both his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own ſurname. His father, the third earl of Roſcommon, had been converted by Uſher to the Proteſtant religion; and when the Popiſh rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Iriſh, ſent for his godſon, and placed him at his own ſeat in Yorkſhire, where he was inſtructed in Latin; which he learned ſo as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar.

Such

Such is the account given by Mr. *Fenton*, from whoſe notes on Waller moſt of this account muſt be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The inſtructor whom he aſſigns to Roſcommon is one Dr. *Hall*, by whom he cannot mean the famous *Hall*, then an old man and a biſhop.

When the ſtorm broke out upon Strafford, his houſe was a ſhelter no longer; and Dillon, by the advice of Uſher, was ſent to *Caen*, where the Proteſtants had then an univerſity, and continued his ſtudies under *Bochart*.

Young Dillon, who was ſent to ſtudy under Bochart, and who is repreſented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was ſent to Caen, is certain: that he was a great ſcholar, may be doubted.

At Caen he is ſaid to have had ſome preter-natural intelligence of his father's death.

"The

"The lord Roſcommon, being a boy of "ten years of age, at Caen in Normandy, "one day was, as it were, madly extrava- "gant in playing, leaping, getting over the "tables, boards, &c. He was wont to be "ſober enough; they ſaid, God grant this "bodes no ill-luck to him! In the heat of "this extravagant fit, he cries out, *My father "is dead.* A fortnight after, news came from "Ireland that his father was dead. This ac- "count I had from Mr. Knolles, who was "his governor, and then with him,—ſince "ſecretary to the earl of Strafford; and I "have heard his lordſhip's relations confirm "the ſame." *Aubrey's Miſcellany.*

The preſent age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, becauſe better evidence of a fact cannot eaſily be found than is here offered, and it muſt be by preſerving ſuch relations that we may at laſt judge how much they are to be regarded. If we ſtay to examine this account, we ſhall ſee difficulties on both ſides: here is the relation

lation of a fact given by a man who had no intereſt to deceive, and who could not be deceived himſelf; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted to diſcover not a future but only a diſtant event, the knowledge of which is of no uſe to him to whom it is revealed. Between theſe difficulties, what way ſhall be found? Is reaſon or teſtimony to be rejected? I believe what Oſborne ſays of an appearance of ſanctity may be applied to ſuch impulſes or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly ſlight them, becauſe they may be true; but do not eaſily truſt them, becauſe they may be falſe.*

The ſtate both of England and Ireland was at this time ſuch, that he who was abſent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roſcommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amuſed himſelf with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon ſkill.

At the Reſtoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain

captain of the band of penſioners, and learned ſo much of the diſſoluteneſs of the court, that he addicted himſelf immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its uſual concomitants, extravagance and diſtreſs.

After ſome time a diſpute about part of his eſtate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by *Fenton*:

"He was at Dublin as much as ever diſ-
"tempered with the ſame fatal affection for
"play, which engaged him in one adventure
"that well deſerves to be related. As he re-
"turned to his lodgings from a gaming-table,
"he was attacked in the dark by three ruffi-
"ans, who were employed to aſſaſſinate him.
"The Earl defended himſelf with ſo much
"reſolution, that he diſpatched one of the
"aggreſſors: whilſt a gentleman accidentally
"paſſing that way, interpoſed, and diſarmed
"another: the third ſecured himſelf by
"flight. This generous aſſiſtant was a diſ-
"banded

"banded officer, of a good family and fair "reputation; who, by what we call the par- "tiality of fortune, to avoid cenſuring the "iniquities of the times, wanted even a plain "ſuit of cloaths to make a decent appearance "at the caſtle. But his lordſhip, on this "occaſion, preſenting him to the Duke of "Ormond, with great importunity prevailed "with his grace, that he might reſign his "poſt of captain of the guards to his friend; "which for about three years the gentleman "enjoyed, and, upon his death, the duke "returned the commiſſion to his generous "benefactor."

When he had finiſhed his buſineſs, he returned to London; was made Maſter of the Horſe to the Dutcheſs of York; and married the Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.

He now buſied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of a ſociety for refining our language and fixing its ſtandard; *in imitation*, ſays Fenton, *of thoſe learned and polite ſocieties with which he had been acquainted abroad.*

abroad. In this deſign his friend Dryden is ſaid to have aſſiſted him.

The ſame deſign, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the miniſtry of Oxford; but it has never ſince been publicly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed by ſome of its eſtabliſhment and its effects. Such a ſociety might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it may be doubted.

The Italian academy ſeems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and ſo fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined their language, and doubtleſs thought rightly; but the event has not ſhewn that they fixed it; for the French of the preſent time is very different from that of the laſt century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academician's place were profitable, it would be given by intereſt; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure

endure the leaſt diſguſt. Unanimity is impoſſible, and debate would ſeparate the aſſembly.

But ſuppoſe the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In abſolute governments, there is ſometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the ſanction of power, and the countenance of greatneſs. How little this is the ſtate of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of public ſport to refuſe all reſpect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an Engliſh academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be ſure to diſobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The preſent manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer ſhould criticiſe himſelf.

All hopes of new literary inſtitutions were quickly ſuppreſſed by the contentious turbulence of King James's reign; and Roſcommon,

mon, foreſeeing that ſome violent concuſſion of the State was at hand, purpoſed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was beſt to ſit near the chimney when the chamber ſmoaked*; a ſentence, of which the application ſeems not very clear.

His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was ſo impatient either of hindrance or of pain, that he ſubmitted himſelf to a French empirick, who is ſaid to have repelled the diſeaſe into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expreſſed the moſt fervent devotion, two lines of his own verſion of *Dies Iræ:*

My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forſake me in my end.

He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Weſtminſter-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton:

"In

"In his writings," ſays Fenton, "we view "the image of a mind which was naturally "ſerious and ſolid: richly furniſhed and "adorned with all the ornaments of learning, "unaffectedly diſpoſed in the moſt regular "and elegant order. His imagination might "have probably been more fruitful and "ſprightly, if his judgement had been leſs "ſevere. But that ſeverity (delivered in a "maſculine, clear, ſuccinct ſtyle) contributed "to make him ſo eminent in the didactical "manner, that no man, with juſtice, can "affirm he was ever equalled by any of our "nation, without confeſſing at the ſame "time that he is inferior to none. In ſome "other kinds of writing his genius ſeems to "have wanted fire to attain the point of "perfection; but who can attain it?"

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that they had been diſplayed in large volumes and numerous performances? Who would not, after the peruſal of this character, be ſurpriſed to find that all the proofs of this genius, and knowledge and judgement, are not ſufficient to

form a ſingle book, or to appear otherwiſe than in conjunction with the works of ſome other writer of the ſame pretty ſize*? But thus it is that characters are written: we know ſomewhat, and we imagine the reſt. The obſervation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and ſprightly, if his judgement had been leſs ſevere, may be anſwered, by a remarker ſomewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary ſuppoſition, that his judgement would probably have been leſs ſevere, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppoſe judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have neceſſarily leſs of one as they have more of the other.

* They were publiſhed together with thoſe of Duke, in an octavo volume, in 1717. The editor, whoever he was, profeſſes to have taken great care to procure and inſert all of his lordſhip's poems that are truly genuine. The truth of this aſſertion is flatly denied by the author of an account of Mr. John Pomfret, prefixed to his Remains; who aſſerts, that the Proſpect of Death was written by that perſon many years after lord Roſcommon's deceaſe; as alſo, that the paraphraſe of the Prayer of Jeremy was written by a gentleman of the name of Southcourt, living in the year 1724. H.

We

We muſt allow of Roſcommon, what Fenton has not mentioned ſo diſtinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verſe before Addiſon; and that, if there are not ſo many or ſo great beauties in his compoſitions as in thoſe of ſome contemporaries, there are at leaſt fewer faults. Nor is this his higheſt praiſe; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,
Roſcommon only boaſts unſpotted lays.

His great work is his Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe; of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his Miſcellanies:

"It was my Lord Roſcommon's Eſſay on "Tranſlated Verſe," ſays Dryden, "which "made me uneaſy, till I tried whether or no "I was capable of the following his rules, and "of reducing the ſpeculation into practice. "For many a fair precept in poetry is like a "ſeeming demonſtration in mathematicks, "very ſpecious in the diagram, but failing in

" the mechanick operation. I think I have " generally obſerved his inſtructions: I am " ſure my reaſon is ſufficiently convinced both " of their truth and uſefulneſs; which, in " other words, is to confeſs no leſs a vanity " than to pretend that I have, at leaſt in ſome " places, made examples to his rules."

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found little more than one of thoſe curſory civilities which one author pays to another; for when the ſum of lord Roſcommon's precepts is collected, it will not be eaſy to diſcover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of tranſlation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abſtract his mind from the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the ſenſe of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author ſhould be ſuitable to the tranſlator's genius; that he ſhould be ſuch as may deſerve a tranſlation; that he who intends to tranſlate him ſhould endeavour to underſtand him; that perſpicuity ſhould be ſtudied, and unuſual and uncouth names ſpa-

ſparingly inſerted; and that the ſtyle of the original ſhould be copied in its elevation and depreſſion. Theſe are the rules that are celebrated as ſo definite and important; and for the delivery of which to mankind ſo much honour has been paid. Roſcommon has indeed deſerved his praiſes, had they been given with diſcernment, and beſtowed not on the rules themſelves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

The Eſſay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The ſtory of the Quack, borrowed from Boileau, was not worth the importation: he has confounded the Britiſh and Saxon mythology:

I grant that from ſome moſſy idol oak,
In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* ſpoke.

The oak, as I think Gildon has obſerved, belonged to the Britiſh druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he ſo liberally ſuppoſes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interpoſition of a long paragraph of blank verſes is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have introduced a ſeries of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the tranſlation of the Art of Poetry; which has received, in my opinion, not leſs praiſe than it deſerves. Blank verſe, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly ſupport itſelf without bold figures and ſtriking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is ſo near to proſe, that the reader only ſcorns it for pretending to be verſe.

Having diſentangled himſelf from the difficulties of rhyme, he may juſtly be expected to give the ſenſe of Horace with great exactneſs, and to ſuppreſs no ſubtilty of ſentiment for the difficulty of expreſſing it. This demand, however, his tranſlation will not ſatisfy; what he found obſcure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among his ſmaller works, the Eclogue of Virgil and the *Dies Iræ* are well tranſlated; though

though the beſt line in the *Dies Iræ* is borrowed from Dryden. In return, ſucceeding poets have borrowed from Roſcommon.

In the verſes on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you* are offenſively confounded; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

His verſions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompenſed by much elegance or vigour.

His political verſes are ſpritely, and when they were written muſt have been very popular.

Of the ſcene of *Guarini*, and the prologue of *Pompey*, Mrs. Philips, in her letters to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the hiſtory.

"Lord Roſcommon," ſays ſhe, "is certainly one of the moſt promiſing young noblemen in Ireland. He has paraphraſed a Pſalm admirably, and a ſcene of *Paſtor Fido* very finely, in ſome places much better than Sir Richard Fanſhaw. This was undertaken merely in compliment to me, who happened

" pened to ſay that it was the beſt ſcene in " Italian, and the worſt in Engliſh. He " was only two hours about it. It begins " thus:

" Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat
" Of ſilent horrour, Reſt's eternal ſeat."

From theſe lines, which are ſince ſomewhat mended, it appears that he did not think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticiſm without reviſal.

When Mrs. Philips was in Ireland, ſome ladies that had ſeen her tranſlation of Pompey reſolved to bring it on the ſtage at Dublin; and, to promote their deſign, Lord Roſcommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering an epilogue; " which," ſays ſhe, " are the beſt performances of thoſe kinds I " ever ſaw." If this is not criticiſm, it is at leaſt gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæſar and Pompey into Ireland, the only country over which Cæſar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roſcommon's works, the judgem entof the publick ſeems to be right. He is elegant, but

but not great; he never labours after exquiſite beauties, and he ſeldom falls into groſs faults. His verſification is ſmooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taſte, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to Engliſh literature.

OTWAY.

OTWAY.

OF THOMAS OTWAY, one of the firſt names in the Engliſh drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleaſure in relating.

He was born at Trottin in Suſſex, March 3, 1651, the ſon of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of *Woolbeding*. From Wincheſter-ſchool, where he was educated, he was entered, in 1669, a commoner of Chriſt-church; but left the univerſity without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical reſtraint, or mere eagerneſs to mingle with the world, is not known.

It ſeems likely that he was in hope of being buſy and conſpicuous: for he went to Lon-

don, and commenced player; but found himſelf unable to gain any reputation on the ſtage *.

This kind of inability he ſhared with Shakſpeare and Jonſon, as he ſhared likewiſe ſome of their excellencies. It ſeems reaſonable to expect that a great dramatick poet ſhould without difficulty become a great actor; that he who can feel, could expreſs; that he who can excite paſſion, ſhould exhibit with great readineſs its external modes: but ſince experience has fully proved that of thoſe powers, whatever be their affinity, one may be poſſeſſed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other; it muſt be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on different uſe of the ſame faculty; that the actor muſt have a pliancy of mien, a flexibility of countenance, and a variety of tones, which the poet may be eaſily ſuppoſed to want; or that the attention of the poet and

* In *Roſcius Anglicanus*, by Downes the prompter, p. 34, we learn, that it was the character of the King in Mrs. Behn's *Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom*, which Mr. Otway attempted to perform and failed in. This event appears to have happened in the year 1672. R.

the

the player have been differently employed; the one has been conſidering thought, and the other action; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himſelf ſuch powers as might qualify for a dramatick author; and, in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced *Alcibiades*, a tragedy; whether from the *Alcibiade* of *Palaprat*, I have not means to enquire. Langbain, the great detector of plagiariſm, is ſilent.

In 1677 he publiſhed *Titus and Berenice*, tranſlated from Rapin, with the *Cheats of Scapin*, from Moliere; and in 1678 *Friendſhip in Faſhion*, a comedy, which, whatever might be its firſt reception, was, upon its revival at Drury-lane in 1749, hiſſed off the ſtage for immorality and obſcenity.

Want of morals, or of decency, did not in thoſe days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and the gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment; and Otway is ſaid to have been at this time

time a favourite companion of the diſſolute wits. But as he who deſires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himſelf, thoſe whom Otway frequented had no purpoſe of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They deſired only to drink and laugh; their fondneſs was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendſhip. Men of wit, ſays one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to ſhare their riots; *from which they were diſmiſſed again to their own narrow circumſtances. Thus they languiſhed in poverty without the ſupport of imminence.*

Some exception, however, muſt be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural ſons, procured for him a cornet's commiſſion in ſome troops then ſent into Flanders. But Otway did not proſper in his military character; for he ſoon left his commiſſion behind him, whatever was the reaſon, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rocheſter mentions with mercileſs inſolence in the *Seſſion of the Poets*:

Tom

Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,
And ſwears for heroicks he writes beſt of any;
Don Carlos his pockets ſo amply had fill'd,
That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.
But Apollo had ſeen his face on the ſtage,
And prudently did not think fit to engage
The ſcum of a play-houſe, for the prop of an age.

Don Carlos, from which he is repreſented as having received ſo much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the lampoon, to have had great ſucceſs, and is ſaid to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reaſonable to doubt, as ſo long a continuance of one play upon the ſtage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffuſed through the whole people, and the audience, conſiſting nearly of the ſame perſons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The *Orphan* was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep poſſeſſion of the ſtage, and has pleaſed for almoſt a century, through all the viciſſitudes of dramatick faſhion.

faſhion. Of this play nothing new can eaſily be ſaid. It is a domeſtick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehenſion of thought, or elegance of expreſſion. But if the heart is intereſted, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be miſſed.

The ſame year produced *the Hiſtory and Fall of Caius Marius*; much of which is borrowed from the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakſpeare.

In 1683 * was publiſhed the firſt, and next year † the ſecond, parts of *The Soldier's Fortune*, two comedies now forgotten: and in 1685 ‡ his laſt and greateſt dramatick work, *Venice Preſerved*, a tragedy, which ſtill continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithſtanding the want of morality in the original deſign, and the deſpicable ſcenes of vile comedy with which he has diverſified his tragick action. By comparing this with his *Orphan*, it will appear that his

* 1681. † 1684. ‡ 1682.

images

images were by time become ſtronger, and his language more energetick. The ſtriking paſſages are in every mouth; and the publick ſeems to judge rightly of the faults and excellencies of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by conſulting nature in his own breaſt.

Together with thoſe plays he wrote the poems which are in the preſent collection, and tranſlated from the French the *Hiſtory of the Triumvirate.*

All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his neceſſities to contract debts, and hunted, as is ſuppoſed, by the tarriers of the law, he retired to a publick houſe on Tower-hill, where he is ſaid to have died of want; or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by ſwallowing, after a long faſt, a piece of bread which charity had ſupplied. He went out, as is reported, almoſt naked in the rage of hunger, and,

and, finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-houſe, aſked him for a ſhilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the firſt mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that Pope, who lived near enough to be well informed, relates in Spence's Memorials, that he died of a fever caught by violent purſuit of a thief that had robbed one of his friends. But that indigence, and its concomitants, ſorrow and deſpondency, preſſed hard upon him, has never been denied, whatever immediate cauſe might bring him to the grave.

Of the poems which the preſent collection admits, the longeſt is the *Poet's Complaint of his Muſe*, part of which I do not underſtand; and in that which is leſs obſcure I find little to commend. The language is often groſs, and the numbers are harſh. Otway had not much cultivated verſification, nor much repleniſhed his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the paſſions, to which Dryden* in his latter years

* In his preface to Freſnoy's *Art of Painting*. Dr. J.

left an illuſtrious teſtimony. He appears by ſome of his verſes to have been a zealous royaliſt, and had what was in thoſe times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

WALLER.

WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colſhill in Hertfordſhire. His father was Robert Waller, Eſquire, of Agmondeſham in Buckinghamſhire, whoſe family was originally a branch of the Kentiſh Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the ſame county, and ſiſter to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him a yearly income of three thouſand five hundred pounds; which, rating together the value of money and the cuſtoms of life, we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thouſand at the preſent time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother at Eaton; and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge. He was ſent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his ſixteenth year, and frequented the court of James the Firſt, where he heard a very remarkable converſation, which the writer of the Life prefixed to his Works, who ſeems to have been well informed of facts, though he may ſometimes err in chronology, has delivered as indubitably certain:

"He found Dr. Andrews, biſhop of Win-"cheſter, and Dr. Neale, biſhop of Durham, "ſtanding behind his Majeſty's chair; and "there happened ſomething extraordinary," continues this writer, "in the converſation "thoſe prelates had with the king, on which "Mr. Waller did often reflect. His Majeſty "aſked the biſhops, "My Lords, cannot I "take my ſubjects money, when I want it, "without all this formality of parliament?" "The biſhop of Durham readily anſwered, "'God forbid, Sir, but you ſhould: you are "the breath of our noſtrils.' Whereupon "the King turned and ſaid to the biſhop of

" Wincheſter, " Well, my Lord, what ſay " you?" ' Sir,' replied the biſhop, ' I have " no ſkill to judge of parliamentary caſes.' " The King anſwered, " No put-offs, my " Lord; anſwer me preſently." Then, Sir, " ſaid he, ' I think it is lawful for you to " take my brother Neale's money; for he " offers it.' Mr. Waller ſaid, the company " was pleaſed with this anſwer, and the wit " of it ſeemed to affect the King; for, a cer- " tain lord coming in ſoon after, his Majeſty " cried out, " Oh, my lord, they ſay you " lig with my Lady." ' No, Sir,' ſays his " Lordſhip in confuſion; ' but I like her " company, becauſe ſhe has ſo much wit.' " " Why then," ſays the King, " do you " not lig with my Lord of Wincheſter there?"

Waller's political and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears in his works, on " the Prince's Eſcape at St. Andero:" a piece which juſtifies the obſervation made by one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity like inſtinct, a ſtyle which perhaps will never be obſolete; and that, " were " we to judge only by the wording, we could

"not know what was wrote at twenty, and "what at fourſcore." His verſification was, in his firſt eſſay, ſuch as it appears in his laſt performance. By the peruſal of Fairfax's tranſlation of Taſſo, to which, as * Dryden relates, he confeſſed himſelf indebted for the ſmoothneſs of his numbers, and by his own nicety of obſervation, he had already formed ſuch a ſyſtem of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured, to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedneſs of his age; but what was acquired by Denham was inherited by Waller.

The next poem, of which the ſubject ſeems to fix the time, is ſuppoſed by Mr. Fenton to be the Addreſs to the Queen, which he conſiders as congratulating her arrival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently miſtaken; for the mention of the nation's obligations to her frequent pregnancy, proves that it was written when ſhe had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poe-

* Preface to his Fables. Dr. J.

tical

tical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham occaſioned; the ſteadineſs with which the King received the news in the chapel, deſerved indeed to be reſcued from oblivion.

Neither of theſe pieces that ſeem to carry their own dates could have been the ſudden effuſion of fancy. In the verſes on the Prince's eſcape, the prediction of his marriage with the princeſs of France muſt have been written after the event; in the other, the promiſes of the King's kindneſs to the deſcendants of Buckingham, which could not be properly praiſed till it had appeared by its effects, ſhew that time was taken for reviſion and improvement. It is not known that they were publiſhed till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.

Waller was not one of thoſe idolaters of praiſe who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer, by marrying Mrs. Banks, a great heireſs in the city, whom the intereſt of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having

brought him a ſon, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer of Oxfordſhire, ſhe died in childbed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty, gay and wealthy, to please himſelf with another marriage.

Being too young to reſiſt beauty, and probably too vain to think himſelf reſiſtable, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiouſly, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldeſt daughter of the Earl of Leiceſter, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sachariſſa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *ſugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a ſpiritleſs mildneſs, and dull good-nature, ſuch as excites rather tenderneſs and eſteem, and ſuch as, though always treated with kindneſs, is never honoured or admired.

Yet he deſcribes Sachariſſa as a ſublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondneſs, whoſe chains he wiſhes, though in vain, to break, and whoſe preſence is *wine* that *inflames to madneſs*.

His

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave wit no opportunity of boaſting its influence; ſhe was not to be ſubdued by the powers of verſe, but rejected his addreſſes, it is ſaid, with diſdain, and drove him away to ſolace his diſappointment with Amoret or Phillis. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newberry in the king's cauſe; and, in her old age, meeting ſomewhere with Waller, aſked him, when he would again write ſuch verſes upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," ſaid he, "and as handſome, as you were then."

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the reſt of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known ſo little to his advantage, that they who read his character will not much condemn Sachariſſa, that ſhe did not deſcend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence compriſed in wit.

The Lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him

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to the ſcholars and ſtateſmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praiſes. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray. Perhaps by traditions preſerved in families more may be diſcovered.

From the verſes written at Penſhurſt, it has been collected that he diverted his diſappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales, think it not improbable that he viſited the Bermudas; but it ſeems much more likely that he ſhould amuſe himſelf with forming an imaginary ſcene, than that ſo important an incident, as a viſit to America, ſhould have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Sallee; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl

of

of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be diſcovered.

When he had loſt all hopes of Sachariſſa, he looked round him for an eaſier conqueſt, and gained a Lady of the family of Breſſe, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been diſcovered that his wife was won by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that ſhe brought him many children. He doubtleſs praiſed ſome whom he would have been afraid to marry, and perhaps married one whom he would have been aſhamed to praiſe. Many qualities contribute to domeſtick happineſs, upon which poetry has no colours to beſtow; and many airs and ſallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for diſtant admiration. No ſpectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that ſhe gave him five ſons and eight daughters.

During

During the long interval of parliament, he is repreſented as living among thoſe with whom it was moſt honourable to converſe, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independence and liberty of ſpeech and conduct which wealth ought always to produce. He was however conſidered as the kinſman of Hampden, and was therefore ſuppoſed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been miſtaken. The King's demand of a ſupply produced one of thoſe noiſy ſpeeches which diſaffection and diſcontent regularly dictate; a ſpeech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. "They," ſays he, "who think themſelves "already undone, can never apprehend themſelves in danger; and they who have "nothing left can never give freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praiſes of courtiers, and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being ſure at that time of a favourable audience.

ence. His topick is ſuch as will always ſerve its purpoſe; an accuſation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully* to *provide* for their *protection againſt Pulpit Law.*

It always gratifies curioſity to trace a ſentiment. Waller has in his ſpeech quoted Hooker in one paſſage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," ſays Waller, "ought to be the firſt thing in "our purpoſe and deſires; but that which is "firſt in dignity is not always to precede in "order of time; for well-being ſuppoſes a "being; and the firſt impediment which men "naturally endeavour to remove, is the want "of thoſe things without which they cannot "ſubſiſt. God firſt aſſigned unto Adam "maintenance of life, and gave him a title "to the reſt of the creatures before he ap-"pointed a law to obſerve."

"God firſt aſſigned Adam," ſays Hooker, "maintenance of life, and then appointed "him a law to obſerve.—True it is, that the "kingdom of God muſt be the firſt thing in "our purpoſe and deſires; but inaſmuch as a "righte-

* "There is no doubt but the ſenſe of "what this nation had ſuffered from the pre- "ſent Biſhops hath produced theſe com- "plaints; and the apprehenſions men have "of ſuffering the like, in time to come, "make ſo many deſire the taking away of "Epiſcopacy: but I conceive it is poſſible "that we may not, now, take a right mea- "ſure of the minds of the people by their "petitions; for, when they ſubſcribed them, "the Biſhops were armed with a dangerous "commiſſion of making new canons, impoſ- "ing new oaths, and the like; but now we "have diſarmed them of that power. Theſe "petitioners lately did look upon Epiſcopacy "as a beaſt armed with horns and claws; "but now that we have cut and pared them "(and may, if we ſee cauſe, yet reduce it "into narrower bounds), it may, perhaps, "be more agreeable. Howſoever, if they be "ſtill in paſſion, it becomes us ſoberly to "conſider the right uſe and antiquity there- "of; and not to comply further with a ge-

* This ſpeech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the Parliamentary Hiſtory. Dr. J.

"neral

" neral desire, than may stand with a general
" good.

" We have already shewed, that episcopacy
" and the evils thereof are mingled like water
" and oil; we have also, in part, severed
" them; but I believe you will find, that our
" laws and the present government of the
" church are mingled like wine and water;
" so inseparable, that the abrogation of, at
" least, a hundred of our laws is desired in
" these petitions. I have often heard a noble
" answer of the Lords, commended in this
" house, to a proposition of like nature, but
" of less consequence; they gave no other
" reason of their refusal but this, *Nolumus*
" *mutare Leges Angliæ:* it was the bishops
" who so answered then; and it would be-
" come the dignity and wisdom of this house
" to answer the people, now, with a *Nolumus*
" *mutare.*

" I see some are moved with a number of
" hands against the Bishops; which, I con-
" fess, rather inclines me to their defence;
" for I look upon Episcopacy as a counter-
" scarp, or out-work; which, if it be taken

" by this assault of the people, and, withal, " this mystery once revealed, *That we must* " *deny them nothing when they ask it thus in* " *troops*, we may, in the next place, have as " hard a task to defend our property, as we " have lately had to recover it from the Pre- " rogative. If, by multiplying hands and " petitions, they prevail for an equality in " things ecclesiastical, the next demand per- " haps may be *Lex Agraria*, the like equality " in things temporal.

" The Roman story tells us, That when " the people began to flock about the senate, " and were more curious to direct and know " what was done, than to obey, that Com- " mon-wealth soon came to ruin: their " *Legem rogare* grew quickly to be a *Legem* " *ferre:* and after, when their legions had " found that they could make a Dictator, " they never suffered the senate to have a " voice any more in such election.

" If these great innovations proceed, I " shall expect a flat and level in learning too, " as well as in church-preferments: *Honos* " *alit Artes*. And though it be true, that " grave

" grave and pious men do ſtudy for learning-
" ſake, and embrace virtue for itſelf; yet it
" is true, that youth, which is the ſeaſon
" when learning is gotten, is not without
" ambition: nor will ever take pains to excel
" in any thing, when there is not ſome hope
" of excelling others in reward and dignity.

" There are two reaſons chiefly alledged
" againſt our church-government.

" Firſt, Scripture, which, as ſome men
" think, points out another form.

" Second, The abuſes of the preſent ſu-
" periors.

" For Scripture, I will not diſpute it in
" this place; but I am confident that, when-
" ever an equal diviſion of lands and goods
" ſhall be deſired, there will be as many
" places in Scripture found out, which ſeem
" to favour that, as there are now alledged
" againſt the prelacy or preferment of the
" church. And, as for abuſes, when you
" are now in the Remonſtrance told what
" this and that poor man hath ſuffered by the

" biſhops, you may be preſented with a thou-
" ſand inſtances of poor men that have re-
" ceived hard meaſure from their landlords;
" and of worldly goods abuſed, to the injury
" of others, and diſadvantage of the owners.

" And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble
" motion is, That we may ſettle men's minds
" herein; and, by a queſtion, declare our
" reſolution, *to reform*, that is, *not to aboliſh*,
" *Epiſcopacy*."

It cannot but be wiſhed that he, who could ſpeak in this manner, had been able to act with ſpirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to ſet the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is ſaid to have withdrawn from the houſe, and to have returned with the king's permiſſion; and, when the king ſet up his ſtandard, he ſent him a thouſand broad-pieces. He continued, however, to ſit in the rebellious conventicle; but " ſpoke," ſays Clarendon, " with great ſharpneſs and freedom, which, " now there was no danger of being outvoted, " was not reſtrained; and therefore uſed as

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"an argument againſt thoſe who were gone "upon pretence that they were not ſuffered "to deliver their opinion freely in the houſe, "which could not be believed, when all "men knew what liberty Mr. Waller took, "and ſpoke every day with impunity againſt "the ſenſe and proceedings of the houſe."

Waller, as he continued to ſit, was one of the commiſſioners nominated by the parliament to treat with the king at Oxford; and when they were preſented, the King ſaid to him, "Though you are the laſt, you are not "the loweſt nor the leaſt in my favour." Whitlock, who, being another of the commiſſioners, was witneſs of this kindneſs, imputes it to the king's knowledge of the plot, in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged againſt the parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes that this attempt to promote the royal cauſe aroſe from his ſenſibility of the king's tenderneſs. Whitlock ſays nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was ſent with ſeveral others to add pomp to the commiſſion, but was not one of thoſe to whom the truſt of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was ſoon afterwards diſcovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the ſame time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, converſing with great confidence, told both their own ſecrets and thoſe of their friends; and, ſurveying the wide extent of their converſation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great diſapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingneſs to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the king, whoſe fear concealed their loyalty; and many deſired peace, though they durſt not oppoſe the clamour for war; and they imagined that if thoſe who had theſe good intentions could be informed of their own ſtrength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of ſedition, by refuſing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the ſupport of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only

only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others; ſo that, if any ſhould be ſuſpected or ſeized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the deſign, and, Clarendon imagines, incidentally mingled, as he was a ſoldier, ſome martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main deſign being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpoſe there was to be appointed one in every diſtrict, to diſtinguiſh the friends of the king, the adherents to the parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded does not appear; the reſult of their enquiry, as Pym declared *, was, that within the walls, for one that was for the Royaliſts, there were three againſt them; but that without the walls, for one that was againſt them, there were five for them. Whether this was ſaid from knowledge or gueſs, was perhaps never enquired.

* Parliamentary Hiſtory, Vol. II. Dr. J.

It is the opinion of Clarendon, that in Waller's plan no violence or ſanguinary reſiſtance was compriſed; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by publick declarations, and to weaken their powers by an oppoſition to new ſupplies. This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but ſuch was the acrimony of the commons, that no method of obſtructing them was ſafe.

About this time another deſign was formed by Sir Nicholas Criſpe, a man of loyalty that deſerves perpetual remembrance: when he was a merchant in the city, he gave and procured the king, in his exigences, an hundred thouſand pounds; and, when he was driven from the Exchange, raiſed a regiment, and commanded it.

Sir Nicholas flattered himſelf with an opinion, that ſome provocation would ſo much exaſperate, or ſome opportunity ſo much encourage, the King's friends in the city, that they would break out in open reſiſtance, and then would want only a lawful ſtandard, and

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an authoriſed commander; and extorted from the King, whoſe judgement too frequently yielded to importunity, a commiſſion of array, directed to ſuch as he thought proper to nominate, which was ſent to London by the Lady Aubigney. She knew not what ſhe carried, but was to deliver it on the communication of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commiſſion could be only intended to lie ready till the time ſhould require it. To have attempted to raiſe any forces, would have been certain deſtruction; it could be of uſe only when the forces ſhould appear. This was, however, an act preparatory to martial hoſtility. Criſpe would undoubtedly have put an end to the ſeſſion of parliament, had his ſtrength been equal to his zeal; and out of the deſign of Criſpe, which involved very little danger, and that of Waller, which was an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid and dreadful plot.

The diſcovery of Waller's deſign is variouſly related. In "Clarendon's Hiſtory" it is told, that a ſervant of Tomkyns, lurking behind

behind the hangings when his maſter was in conference with Waller, heard enough to qualify him for an informer, and carried his intelligence to Pym. A manuſcript, quoted in the "Life of Waller," relates, that "he "was betrayed by his ſiſter Price, and her "Preſbyterian chaplain Mr. Goode, who ſtole "ſome of his papers; and if he had not "ſtrangely dreamed the night before, that "his ſiſter had betrayed him, and thereupon "burnt the reſt of his papers by the fire that "was in his chimney, he had certainly loſt "his life by it." The queſtion cannot be decided. It is not unreaſonable to believe that the men in power, receiving intelligence from the ſiſter, would employ the ſervant of Tomkyns to liſten at the conference, that they might avoid an act ſo offenſive as that of deſtroying the brother by the ſiſter's teſtimony.

The plot was publiſhed in the moſt terrifick manner.

On the 31ſt of May (1643), at a ſolemn faſt, when they were liſtening to the ſermon, a meſſenger entered the church, and communicated

nicated his errand to Pym, who whiſpered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the reſt in ſolicitude and amazement. They immediately ſent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had been intercepted, from which it appeared that the parliament and the city were ſoon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themſelves, beyond ſome general and indiſtinct notices. "But Waller," ſays Clarendon, "was ſo "confounded with fear, that he confeſſed "whatever he had heard, ſaid, thought, or "ſeen; all that he knew of himſelf, and all that "he ſuſpected of others, without concealing "any perſon, of what degree or quality ſo-"ever, or any diſcourſe which he had ever "upon any occaſion entertained with them; "what ſuch and ſuch ladies of great honour, "to whom, upon the credit of his wit and "great reputation, he had been admitted, "had ſpoke to him in their chambers upon "the proceedings in the Houſes, and how

"they had encouraged him to oppoſe them; "what correſpondence and intercourſe they "had with ſome Miniſters of State at Oxford, "and how they had conveyed all intelligence "thither." He accuſed the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the tranſaction; and teſtified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himſelf diſpoſed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confeſſed much, which they could never have diſcovered, and perhaps ſomewhat which they would wiſh to have been ſuppreſſed; for it is inconvenient, in the conflict of factions, to have that diſaffection known which cannot ſafely be puniſhed.

Tomkyns was ſeized on the ſame night with Waller, and appears likewiſe to have partaken of his cowardice; for he gave notice of Criſpe's commiſſion of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was diſcovered. Tomkyns had been ſent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigney, and

and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confeſſes them to have had, the original copy.

It can raiſe no wonder that they formed one plot out of theſe two deſigns, however remote from each other, when they ſaw the ſame agent employed in both, and found the commiſſion of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the moſt. They ſent Pym among the citizents, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy eſcape; and inform them, that the deſign was "to ſeize "the Lord Mayor and all the Committee of "Militia, and would not ſpare one of them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either houſe, by which he declared his deteſtation of all conſpiracies againſt the parliament, and his reſolution to detect and oppoſe them. They then appointed a day of thankſgiving for this wonderful delivery; which ſhut out, ſays

Clarendon, all doubts whether there had been ſuch a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the cuſtody of the mayor, and the other of the ſheriff: but their lands and goods were not ſeized.

Waller was ſtill to immerſe himſelf deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge; and there was no evidence againſt them but the confeſſion of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to queſtion the veracity. With theſe doubts he was ſo much terrified, that he endeavoured to perſuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition. "But for me," ſays he, "you had never known any thing of "this buſineſs, which was prepared for ano-"ther; and therefore I cannot imagine why "you ſhould hide it ſo far as to contract "your own ruin by concealing it, and per-"ſiſting unreaſonably to hide that truth, "which, without you, already is, and will

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"every day be made more manifeſt. Can "you imagine yourſelf bound in honour to "keep that ſecret, which is already revealed "by another? or poſſible it ſhould ſtill be a "ſecret, which is known to one of the other "ſex?—If you perſiſt to be cruel to yourſelf "for their ſakes who deſerve it not, it will "nevertheleſs be made appear, ere long, I "fear, to your ruin. Surely, if I had the "happineſs to wait on you, I could move "you to compaſſionate both yourſelf and me, "who, deſperate as my caſe is, am deſirous "to die with the honour of being known to "have declared the truth. You have no "reaſon to contend to hide what is already "revealed—inconſiderately to throw away "yourſelf, for the intereſt of others, to whom "you are leſs obliged than you are aware of."

This perſuaſion ſeems to have had little effect. Portland ſent (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to tell them, that he "is in "cuſtody, as he conceives, without any "charge; and that, by what Mr. Waller "hath threatened him with ſince he was im-"priſoned, he doth apprehend a very cruel, "long, and ruinous reſtraint:—He therefore "prays,

"prays, that he may not find the effects of "Mr. Waller's threats, by a long and close "imprisonment; but may be speedily brought "to a legal trial, and then he is confident "the vanity and falsehood of those informa- "tions which have been given against him "will appear."

In consequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Portland and Waller to be confronted; when the one repeated his charge, and the other his denial. The examination of the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, usher of the house of Lords, deposed, that Mr. Waller having had a conference with the Lord Portland in an upper room, Lord Portland said, when he came down, "Do me "the favour to tell my Lord Northumber- "land, that Mr. Waller has extremely pressed "me to save my own life and his, by throw- "ing the blame upon the Lord Conway and "the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reasons which he could urge with resistless efficacy in a personal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence,

menace, whether of perſuaſion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtleſs Lady Aubigney, who, upon this occaſion, was committed to cuſtody; but who, in reality, when ſhe delivered the commiſſion, knew not what it was.

The parliament then proceeded againſt the conſpirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, ſaid it was a *fooliſh buſineſs*; and indeed there ſeems to have been no hope that it ſhould eſcape diſcovery; for though never more than three met at a time, yet a deſign ſo extenſive muſt, by neceſſity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was, that he had commiſſion to raiſe money for the King; but it appears not that the money

was to be expended upon the advancement of either Criſpe or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for proſecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway perſiſting to deny the charge, and no teſtimony but Waller's yet appearing againſt them, were, after a long impriſonment, admitted to bail. Haſſel, the King's meſſenger, who carried the letters to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden eſcaped death, perhaps by the intereſt of his family; but was kept in priſon to the end of his life. They whoſe names were inſerted in the commiſſion of array were not capitally puniſhed, as it could not be proved that they had conſented to their own nomination; but they were conſidered as malignants, and their eſtates were ſeized.

"Waller, though confeſſedly," ſays Clarendon, "the moſt guilty, with incredible "diſſimulation affected ſuch a remorſe of "conſcience, that his trial was put off, out "of Chriſtian compaſſion, till he might re-"cover his underſtanding." What uſe he made

made of this interval, with what liberality and ſucceſs he diſtributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the Houſe, he confeſſed and lamented, and ſubmitted and implored, may be read in the Hiſtory of the Rebellion (B. vii.). The ſpeech, to which Clarendon aſcribes the preſervation of his *dear-bought life*, is inſerted in his works. The great hiſtorian, however, ſeems to have been miſtaken in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his ſupplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock, he was by expulſion from the Houſe abandoned to the tribunal which he ſo much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Eſſex; but after a year's impriſonment, in which time reſentment grew leſs acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thouſand pounds, he was permitted to *recollect himſelf in another country*.

Of his behaviour in this part of his life, it is not neceſſary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us not," ſays his laſt ingenious biographer, "condemn him with untempered ſe-"verity, becauſe he was not a prodigy which "the world hath ſeldom ſeen, becauſe his

" character included not the poet, the orator,
" and the hero."

For the place of his exile he choſe France, and ſtayed ſome time at Roan, where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuenſis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great ſplendor and hoſpitality; and from time to time amuſed himſelf with poetry, in which he ſometimes ſpeaks of the rebels, and their uſurpation, in the natural language of an honeſt man.

At laſt it became neceſſary, for his ſupport, to ſell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he ſaid, at laſt *to the rump-jewel*, he ſolicited from Cromwell permiſſion to return, and obtained it by the intereſt of colonel Scroop, to whom his ſiſter was married. Upon the remains of a fortune, which the danger of his life had very much diminiſhed, he lived at Hall-barn, a houſe built by himſelf, very near to Beaconsfield, where his mother reſided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cauſe, and, when Cromwell viſited her,

her, uſed to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and ſay he would not diſpute with his aunt; but finding in time that ſhe acted for the king, as well as talked, he made her a priſoner to her own daughter, in her own houſe. If he would do any thing, he could not do leſs.

Cromwell, now protector, received Waller, as his kinſman, to a familiar converſation. Waller, as he uſed to relate, found him ſufficiently verſed in ancient hiſtory; and when any of his enthuſiaſtick friends came to adviſe or conſult him, could ſometimes overhear him diſcourſing in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would ſay, "Couſin Waller, "I muſt talk to theſe "men in their own way:" and reſumed the common ſtyle of converſation.

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous panegyrick, which has been always conſidered as the firſt of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiaſtic topicks is very judicious; for he conſiders Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is conſequently

ſequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with ſhades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which he obtained the ſupreme power is lightly treated, and decently juſtified. It was certainly to be deſired that the deteſtable band ſhould be diſſolved, which had deſtroyed the church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppreſſion; yet Cromwell had not the right of diſſolving them, for all that he had before done could be juſtified only by ſuppoſing them inveſted with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedneſs would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not thoſe, who have long practiſed perfidy, grow faithleſs to each other.

In the poem on the war with Spain are ſome paſſages at leaſt equal to the beſt parts of the panegyrick; and, in the concluſion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very deſirous,

as appears from his converſation, related by Whitlock, of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is ſuppoſed to have been with-held from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he ſhould govern by the name of King, would have reſtrained his authority. When therefore a deputation was ſolemnly ſent to invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refuſed it, but is ſaid to have fainted in his coach, when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector ſeems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the ſame occaſion; but they were young men, ſtruggling into notice, and hoping for ſome favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to expect; he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to aſk any thing from thoſe who ſhould ſucceed him.

Soon afterwards the Reſtauration ſupplied him with another ſubject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody,

with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not poſſible to read, without ſome contempt and indignation, poems of the ſame author, aſcribing the higheſt degree of *power and piety* to Charles the Firſt, then transferring the ſame *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell, now inviting Oliver to take the Crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his teſtimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praiſes as effuſions of reverence; they could conſider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependence.

Poets, indeed, profeſs fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the viciſſitudes of the world happen to exalt, muſt be ſcorned as a proſtituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has loſt the dignity of virtue.

The Congratulation was conſidered as inferior in poetical merit to the Panegyrick; and it is reported, that, when the king told Waller

leſs of the diſparity, he anſwered, "Poets, Sir, ſucceed better in fiction than in truth."

The Congratulation is indeed not inferior to the Panegyrick, either by decay of genius, or for want of diligence; but becauſe Cromwell had done much, and Charles had done little, Cromwell wanted nothing to raiſe him to heroick excellence but virtue; and virtue his poet thought himſelf at liberty to ſupply. Charles had yet only the merit of ſtruggling without ſucceſs, and ſuffering without deſpair. A life of eſcapes and indigence could ſupply poetry with no ſplendid images.

In the firſt parliament ſummoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661), Waller ſat for Haſtings in Suſſex, and ſerved for different places in all the parliaments of that reign. In a time when fancy and gaiety were the moſt powerful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that Waller was forgotten. He paſſed his time in the company that was higheſt, both in rank and wit, from which even his obſtinate ſobriety did not exclude him. Though he drank water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to heighten the mirth of Bac-

Bacchanalian aſſemblies; and Mr. Saville ſaid, that "no man in England ſhould keep "him company without drinking but Ned "Waller."

The praiſe given him by St. Evremond is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he could be known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an Engliſh penſion, never condeſcended to underſtand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In the parliament, "he was," ſays Burnet, "the delight of the houſe, and though old "ſaid the livelieſt things of any among them." This, however, is ſaid in his account of the year ſeventy-five, when Waller was only ſeventy. His name as a ſpeaker occurs often in Grey's Collections; but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting ſallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.

He was of ſuch conſideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew, ſays Burnet,

net, a lively reflection from Waller the celebrated wit. "He said, the house of commons had resolved that the duke should "not reign after the king's death; but the "king, in opposition to them, had resolved "that he should reign even in his life." If there appear no extraordinary *liveliness* in this *remark*, yet its reception proves the speaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not suffer his reputation to die gradually away, which may easily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical distinction from time to time, as occasions were offered, either by publick events or private incidents; and, contenting himself with the influence of his muse, or loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magistracy.

He was not, however, without some attention to his fortune; for he asked from the King (in 1665) the provostship of Eaton College, and obtained it; but Clarendon refused to put the seal to the grant, alledging that it could

could be held only by a clergyman. It is known that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himſelf for it by Deacon's orders.

To this oppoſition, the *Biographia* imputes the violence and acrimony with which Waller joined Buckingham's faction in the proſecution of Clarendon. The motive was illiberal and diſhoneſt, and ſhewed that more than ſixty years had not been able to teach him morality. His accuſation is ſuch as conſcience can hardly be ſuppoſed to dictate without the help of malice. "We were to be go-"verned by janizaries inſtead of parliaments, "and are in danger from a worſe plot than "that of the fifth of November; then, if "the Lords and Commons had been deſtroyed, "there had been a ſucceſſion; but here both "had been deſtroyed for ever." This is the language of a man who is glad of an opportunity to rail, and ready to ſacrifice truth to intereſt at one time and to anger at another.

A year after the Chancellor's baniſhment, another vacancy gave him encouragement for another petition, which the King referred to the council, who, after hearing the queſtion ar-

argued by lawyers for three days, determined that the office could be held only by a clergyman, according to the act of uniformity, since the provosts had always received institution, as for a parsonage, from the bishops of Lincoln. The King then said, he could not break the Law which he had made: and Dr. Zachary Cradock, famous for a single sermon, at most for two sermons, was chosen by the Fellows.

That he asked any thing more is not known; it is certain that he obtained nothing, though he continued obsequious to the court through the rest of Charles's reign.

At the accession of King James (in 1685) he was chosen for parliament, being then fourscore, at Saltash in Cornwall; and wrote a *Presage of the Downfall of the Turkish Empire*, which he presented to the King on his birth-day. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Tasso he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having soon after begun what he thought a Holy

a Holy War at home, made haſte to put all moleſtation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindneſs and familiarity, of which inſtances are given by the writer of his life. One day, taking him into the cloſet, the King aſked him how he liked one of the pictures: "My eyes," ſaid Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The king ſaid, it was the princeſs of Orange. "She is," ſaid Waller, "like the greateſt "woman in the world." The King aſked who was that; and was anſwered, Queen Elizabeth. "I wonder," ſaid the King, "you ſhould think ſo; but I muſt confeſs "ſhe had a wiſe council." "And, Sir," ſaid Waller, "did you ever know a fool "chuſe a wiſe one?" Such is the ſtory, which I once heard of ſome other man. Pointed axioms, and acute replies, fly looſe about the world, and are aſſigned ſucceſſively to thoſe whom it may be the faſhion to celebrate.

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch, a clergyman, be ordered a French gentleman to tell

tell him, that "the King wondered he could "think of marrying his daughter to a falling "church." "The King," says Waller, "does me great honour, in taking notice of "my domestick affairs; but I have lived "long enough to observe that this falling "church has got a trick of rising again."

He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct; and said, that, "he would be left "like a whale upon the strand." Whether he was privy to any of the transactions which ended in the Revolution, is not known. His heir joined the prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws of nature seldom suffer life to be extended, otherwise than by a future state, he seems to have turned his mind upon preparation for the decisive hour, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. It is pleasing to discover that his piety was without weakness; that his intellectual powers continued vigorous; and that the lines which he composed when *he, for age, could neither read nor write*, are not inferior to the effusions of his youth.

Towards

Towards the decline of life, he bought a ſmall houſe, with a little land at Colſhill; and ſaid, "he ſhould be glad to die, like the "ſtag, where he was rouſed." This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs grow turgid: he went to Windſor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requeſted him, as both a friend and phyſician, to tell him, *what that ſwelling meant*. "Sir," anſwered Scarborough, "your blood will "run no longer." Waller repeated ſome lines of Virgil, and went home to die.

As the diſeaſe increaſed upon him, he compoſed himſelf for his departure; and calling upon Dr. Birch to give him the holy ſacrament, he deſired his children to take it with him, and made an earneſt declaration of his faith in Chriſtianity. It now appeared, what part of his converſation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being preſent when the duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he ſaid to him, "My Lord, I am "a great deal older than your grace, and "have,

"have, I believe, heard more arguments for "Atheiſm than ever your grace did; but I "have lived long enough to ſee there is "nothing in them; and ſo, I hope, your "grace will."

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his ſon's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inſcription, and which I hope is now reſcued from dilapidation.

He left ſeveral children by his ſecond wife; of whom, his daughter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldeſt ſon, was diſinherited, and ſent to New Jerſey, as wanting common underſtanding. Edmund, the ſecond ſon, inherited the eſtate, and repreſented Agmondeſham in parliament, but at laſt turned Quaker. William, the third ſon, was a merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commiſſioners for the Union. There is ſaid to have been a fifth, of whom no account has deſcended.

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual, has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can preſume to emulate. It is therefore inſerted here, with ſuch remarks as others have ſupplied; after which, nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

"Edmund Waller," ſays Clarendon, "was "born to a very fair eſtate, by the parſimony, "or frugality, of a wiſe father and mother: "and he thought it ſo commendable an ad- "vantage, that he reſolved to improve it with "his utmoſt care, upon which in his nature "he was too much intent; and, in order to "that, he was ſo much reſerved and retired, "that he was ſcarcely ever heard of, till by his "addreſs and dexterity he had gotten a very "rich wife in the city, againſt all the recom- "mendation and countenance and authority "of the Court, which was thoroughly enga- "ged on the behalf of Mr. Croſts, and "which uſed to be ſucceſsful, in that age, "againſt any oppoſition. He had the good "fortune to have an alliance and friendſhip "with

"with Dr. Morley, who had aſſiſted and "inſtructed him in the reading many good "books, to which his natural parts and "promptitude inclined him, eſpecially the "poets; and at the age when other men "uſed to give over writing verſes (for he was "near thirty years when he firſt engaged "himſelf in that exerciſe, at leaſt that he "was known to do ſo), he ſurpriſed the "town with two or three pieces of that kind; "as if a tenth Muſe had been newly born "to cheriſh drooping poetry. The Doctor "at that time brought him into that com-"pany, which was moſt celebrated for good "converſation; where he was received and "eſteemed with great applauſe and reſpect. "He was a very pleaſant diſcourſer in earneſt "and in jeſt, and therefore very grateful to "all kind of company, where he was not "the leſs eſteemed for being very rich.

"He had been even nurſed in parliaments, "where he ſat when he was very young; and "ſo, when they were reſumed again (after a "long intermiſſion), he appeared in thoſe aſ-"ſemblies with great advantage; having a "graceful way of ſpeaking, and by thinking

" much on ſeveral arguments (which his tem-
" per and complexion, that had much of
" melancholick, inclined him to), he ſeemed
" often to ſpeak upon the ſudden, when the
" occaſion had only adminiſtered the oppor-
" tunity of ſaying what he had thoroughly
" conſidered, which gave a great luſtre to all
" he ſaid; which yet was rather of delight
" than weight. There needs no more be
" ſaid to extol the excellence and power of
" his wit, and pleaſantneſs of his converſa-
" tion, than that it was of magnitude enough
" to cover a world of very great faults; that
" is, ſo to cover them, that they were not
" taken notice of to his reproach; viz. a
" narrowneſs in his nature to the loweſt
" degree; an abjectneſs and want of courage
" to ſupport him in any virtuous undertaking,
" an inſinuation and ſervile flattery to the
" height, the vaineſt and moſt imperious na-
" ture could be contented with; that it pre-
" ſerved and won his life from thoſe who moſt
" reſolved to take it, and in an occaſion in
" which he ought to have been ambitious to
" have loſt it; and then preſerved him again
" from the reproach and contempt that was
" due to him for ſo preſerving it, and for

" vin-

"vindicating it at ſuch a price that it had "power to reconcile him to thoſe whom he "had moſt offended and provoked; and con- "tinued to his age with that rare felicity, "that his company was acceptable, where "his ſpirit was odious; and he was at leaſt "pitied, where he was moſt deteſted."

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may not be improper to make ſome remarks.

"He was very little known till he had ob- "tained a rich wife in the city."

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three-and-twenty; an age before which few men are conſpicuous much to their advantage. He was now, however, in parliament and at court; and, if he ſpent part of his time in privacy, it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as well as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his retirement is the more probable, be- cauſe he has evidently miſtaken the com-

mencement of his poetry, which he ſuppoſes him not to have attempted before thirty. As his firſt pieces were perhaps not printed, the ſucceſſion of his compoſitions was not known; and Clarendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very ſtudious of poetry, did not rectify his firſt opinion by conſulting Waller's book.

Clarendon obſerves, that he was introduced to the wits of the age by Dr. Morley; but the writer of his Life relates that he was already among them, when, hearing a noiſe in the ſtreet, and enquiring the cauſe, they found a ſon of Ben Jonſon under an arreſt. This was Morley, whom Waller ſet free at the expence of one hundred pounds, took him into the country as director of his ſtudies, and then procured him admiſſion into the company of the friends of literature. Of this fact, Clarendon had a nearer knowledge than the biographer, and is therefore more to be credited.

The account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is ſeconded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the delight of the houſe," adds, that "he was only concerned to ſay "that

"that, which ſhould make him be applauded, "he never laid the buſineſs of the Houſe to "heart, being a vain and empty, though a "witty, man."

Of his inſinuation and flattery it is not unreaſonable to believe that the truth is told. Aſcham, in his elegant deſcription of thoſe whom in modern language we term Wits, ſays, that they are *open flatterers, and privy mockers.* Waller ſhewed a little of both, when, upon ſight of the Dutcheſs of Newcaſtle's verſes on the death of a Stag, he declared that he would give all his own compoſitions to have written them and being charged with the exorbitance of his adulation, anſwered, that "nothing was too much to "be given, that a lady might be ſaved from "the diſgrace of ſuch a vile performance." This however was no very miſchievous or very unuſual deviation from truth: had his hypocriſy been confined to ſuch tranſactions, he might have been forgiven, though not praiſed; for who forbears to flatter an author or a lady?

Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakneſs of his reſolution, he expe-

rienced the natural effect, by losing the esteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the safety of Hampden's son.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whose sake he prosecuted Crawley with great bitterness; and the invective which he pronounced on that occasion was so popular, that twenty thousand copies are said by his biographer to have been sold in one day.

It is confessed that his faults still left him many friends, at least many companions. His convivial power of pleasing is universally acknowledged; but those who conversed with him intimately, found him not only passionate, especially in his old age, but resentful; so that the interposition of friends was sometimes necessary.

His

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurſt in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pompey; and is ſaid to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the Rehearſal.

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little leſs than criminal, was either not conſtant or not ſucceſsful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thouſand five hundred pounds a year in the time of James the Firſt, and augmented at leaſt by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once poſſeſſed.

Of this diminution, part was the conſequence of the gifts which he was forced to ſcatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot; and if his eſtate, as is related in his Life, was ſequeſtered, he had probably contracted debts when

when he lived in exile; for we are told, that at Paris he lived in ſplendor, and was the only Engliſhman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to ſell a thouſand a year; of the waſte of the reſt there is no account, except that he is confeſſed by his biographer to have been a bad œconomiſt. He ſeems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his firſt years, and a ſquanderer in his laſt.

Of his courſe of ſtudies, or choice of books, nothing is known more than that he profeſſed himſelf unable to read Chapman's tranſlation of Homer without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration, that "he would "blot from his works any line that did not "contain ſome motive to virtue."

THE characters, by which Waller intended to diſtinguiſh his writing, are ſpritelineſs and dignity; in his ſmaller pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger, to be great. Of his airy and light productions,

the chief ſource is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence which has deſcended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occaſional, and his addreſſes perſonal, he was not ſo liberally ſupplied with grand as with ſoft images; for beauty is more eaſily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, reſtrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the ſlighteſt matter. He has, therefore, in his whole volume, nothing burleſque, and ſeldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He ſeems always to do his beſt; though his ſubjects are often unworthy of his care. It is not eaſy to think without ſome contempt on an author, who is growing illuſtrious in his own opinion by verſes, at one time, "To a Lady, who can do any "thing, but ſleep, when ſhe pleaſes;" at another, "To a lady who can ſleep when ſhe pleaſ-"es;" now, "To a Lady, on her paſſing "through a crowd of people;" then, "On a "braid of divers colours woven by four Ladies;" "On a tree cut in paper;" or, "To a Lady, "from whom he received the copy of verſes "on

"on the paper-tree, which, for many years, "had been miſſing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We ſtill read the *Dove* of Anacreon, and *Sparrow* of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleaſes himſelf with a performance, which owes nothing to the ſubject. But compoſitions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for ſomething uſeful; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of ſhort duration; or they are bloſſoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are ſome, which their excellency ought to ſecure from oblivion; as, *To Amoret*, comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sachariſſa*; and the verſes *On Love*, that begin, *Anger in haſty words or blows.*

In others he is not equally ſucceſsful; ſometimes his thoughts are deficient, and ſometimes his expreſſion.

The

The numbers are not always muſical; as,

Fair Venus, in thy ſoft arms
The god of rage confine;
For thy whiſpers are the charms
Which only can divert his fierce deſign.
What though he frown, and to tumult do incline;
Thou the flame
Kindled in his breaſt canſt tame
With that ſnow which unmelted lies on thine.

He ſeldom indeed fetches an amorous ſentiment from the depths of ſcience; his thoughts are for the moſt part eaſily underſtood, and his images ſuch as the ſuperficies of nature readily ſupplies; he has a juſt claim to popularity, becauſe he writes to common degrees of knowledge; and is free at leaſt from philoſophical pedantry, unleſs perhaps the end of a ſong *to the Sun* may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added the ſimile of the *Palm* in the verſes *on her paſſing through a crowd*; and a line in a more ſerious poem on the *Reſtoration*, about vipers and treacle, which can only be underſtood by thoſe who happen to know the compoſition of the *Theriaca*.

His

His thoughts are ſometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural:

— The plants admire,
No leſs than thoſe of old did Orpheus' lyre;
If ſhe ſit down, with tops all tow'rds her bow'd;
They round about her into arbours crowd:
Or if ſhe walks, in even ranks they ſtand,
Like ſome wall-marſhal'd and obſequious band.

In another place;

While in the park I ſing, the liſtening deer
Attend my paſſion, and forget to fear:
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the ſame.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,
With loud complaints they anſwer me in ſhowers.
To thee a wild and cruel ſoul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!

On the head of a ſtag.

O fertile head! which every year
Could ſuch a crop of wonder bear!
The teeming earth did never bring
So ſoon, ſo hard, ſo huge a thing:
Which might it never have been caſt,
Each year's growth added to the laſt,

Theſe lofty branches had ſupply'd
The Earth's bold ſon's prodigious pride;
Heaven with theſe engines had been ſcal'd
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd.

Sometimes having ſucceeded in the firſt part, he makes a feeble concluſion. In the ſong of "Sachariſſa's and Amoret's Friend-"ſhip," the two laſt ſtanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the higheſt degree delicate.

Then ſhall my love this doubt diſplace,
And gain ſuch truſt that I may come
And banquet ſometimes on thy face,
But make my conſtant meals at home.

Some applications may be thought too remote and unconſequential: as in the verſes on the *Lady Dancing*:

The ſun in figures ſuch as theſe
Joys with the moon to play:
To the ſweet ſtrains they advance,
Which do reſult from their own ſpheres;
As this nymph's dance
Moves with the numbers which ſhe hears.

Some-

Sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a diſtich, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and almoſt evaneſcent.

Chloris! ſince firſt our calm of peace
Was frighted hence, this good we find,
Your favours with your fears increaſe,
And growing miſchiefs make you kind.

So the fair tree, which ſtill preſerves
Her fruit, and ſtate, while no wind blows,
In ſtorms from that uprightneſs ſwerves;
And the glad earth about her ſtrows
With treaſure from her yielding boughs.

His images are not always diſtinct; as, in the following paſſage, he confounds *Love* as a perſon with *love* as a paſſion:

Some other nymphs, with colours faint,
And pencil ſlow, may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time deſtroy;
She has a ſtamp, and prints the Boy
Can, with a ſingle look, inflame
The coldeſt breaſt, the rudeſt tame.

His fallies of caſual flattery are ſometimes elegant and happy, as that *in return for the Silver Pen*; and ſometimes empty and trifling.

fling, as that *upon the Card torn by the Queen.* There are a few lines *written in the Dutchess's Passe*, which he is said by Fenton to have kept a summer under correction. It happened to Waller, as to others, that his success was not always in proportion to his labour.

Of these petty compositions, neither the beauties nor the faults deserve much attention. The amorous verses have this to recommend them, that they are less hyperbolical than those of some other poets. Waller is not always at the last gasp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a smile. There is, however, too much love, and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human passions, and the variety of human wants. Such books, therefore, may be considered as shewing the world under a false appearance, and, so far as they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as misleading expectation, and misguiding practice.

Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is panegyrical: for of praiſe he was very laviſh, as is obſerved by his imitator, Lord Lanſdowne:

No ſatyr ſtalks within the hallow'd ground,
But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound;
Glory and arms and love are all the ſound.

In the firſt poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coaſt of Spain, there is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the laſt paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculouſly mean, and in part ridiculouſly tumid. The poem, however, is ſuch as may be juſtly praiſed, without much allowance for the ſtate of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of* Buckingham, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the firſt, uſed the Pagan deities with great propriety:

'Twas want of ſuch a precedent as this
Made the old Heathen frame their gods amiſs.

In the poem on the Navy, thoſe lines are very noble which ſuppoſe the King's power ſecure againſt a ſecond Deluge; ſo noble, that it were almoſt criminal to remark the miſtake of *centre* for *ſurface*, or to ſay that the empire of the ſea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.

The poem upon Sallee has forcible ſentiments; but the concluſion is feeble. That on the Repairs of St Paul's has ſomething vulgar and obvious; ſuch as the mention of Amphion; and ſomething violent and harſh, as

So all our minds with his conſpire to grace
The Gentiles' great apoſtle, and deface
Thoſe ſtate-obſcuring ſheds, that like a chain
Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:
Which the glad ſaint ſhakes off at his command,
As once the viper from his ſacred hand.
So joys the aged oak, when we divide
The creeping ivy from his injur'd ſide.

Of the two laſt couplets, the firſt is extravagant, and the ſecond mean.

His praiſe of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that ſhe "ſaves "lovers, by cutting off hope, as gangrenes "are cured by lopping the limb," preſents nothing to the mind but diſguſt and horror.

Of the *Battle of the Summer Iſlands*, it ſeems not eaſy to ſay whether it is intended to raiſe terror or merriment. The beginning is too ſplendid for jeſt, and the concluſion too light for ſerioufneſs. The verſification is ſtudied, the ſcenes are diligently diſplayed, and the images artfully amplified; but as it ends neither in joy nor ſorrow, it will ſcarcely be read a ſecond time.

The *Panegyrick* upon Cromwell has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praiſe, which however cannot be ſaid to have been unjuſtly laviſhed; for ſuch a ſeries of verſes had rarely appeared before in the Engliſh language. Of the lines ſome are grand, ſome are graceful, and all are muſical. There is now and then a feeble verſe, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero.

The

The poem of *The War with Spain* begins with lines more vigorous and ſtriking than Waller is accuſtomed to produce. The ſucceeding parts are variegated with better paſſages and worſe. There is ſomething too farfetched in the compariſon of the Spaniards drawing the Engliſh on, by ſaluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to lambs awakening the lion by bleating.* The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ſhip, would have moved more, had the poet not made him die like the Phœnix, becauſe he had ſpices about him, nor expreſſed their affection and their end by a conceit at once falſe and vulgar:

> Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,
> And now together are to aſhes turn'd.

The verſes to Charles, on his Return, were doubtleſs intended to counterbalance the panegyrick on Cromwell. If it has been thought inferior to that with which it is naturally compared, the cauſe of its deficience has been already remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not neceſſary to examine ſingly. They muſt be ſuppoſed to have faults and beauties of the ſame kind with the reſt. The Sacred Poems, however, deſerve particular regard; they were the work of Waller's declining life, of thoſe hours in which he looked upon the fame and the folly of the time paſt with the ſentiments which his great predeceſſor Petrarch bequeathed to poſterity, upon his review of that love and poetry which have given him immortality.

That natural jealouſy which makes every man unwilling to allow much excellence in another, always produces a diſpoſition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; and that he, whom we are now forced to confeſs ſuperior, is haſtening daily to a level with ourſelves. By delighting to think this of the living, we learn to think it of the dead; and Fenton, with all his kindneſs for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius paſſed the zenith, which he places at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a ſmall portion. Intellectual decay is doubtleſs not uncommon; but it

ſeems

ſeems not to be univerſal. Newton was in his eighty-fifth year improving his chronology, a few days before his death; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have loſt at eighty-two any part of his poetical power.

His Sacred Poems do not pleaſe like ſome of his other works; but before the fatal fifty-five, had he written on the ſame ſubjects, his ſucceſs would hardly have been better.

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verſe has been too little applied to the purpoſes of worſhip, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry; that they have very ſeldom attained their end is ſufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miſcarried.

Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in oppoſition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often pleaſe. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactick poem; and he, who has the happy power of arguing in verſe, will not loſe it becauſe his ſubject is ſacred. A poet may

deſcribe the beauty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the Spring, and the harveſts of Autumn, the viciſſitudes of the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praiſe their Maker for his works, in lines which no reader ſhall lay aſide. The ſubject of the diſputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the deſcription is not God, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourſe between God and the human ſoul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher ſtate than poetry can confer.

The eſſence of poetry is invention; ſuch invention as, by producing ſomething unexpected, ſurpriſes and delights. The topicks of devotion are few, and being few are univerſally known; but, few as there are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of ſentiment, and very little from novelty of expreſſion.

Poetry pleaſes by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themſelves afford.

afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel, the imagination: but religion must be shewn as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desireable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the judge, is not

not at leiſure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuſe itſelf through many topicks of perſuaſion; but ſupplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of ſentiments purely religious, it will be found that the moſt ſimple expreſſion is the moſt ſublime. Poetry loſes its luſtre and its power, becauſe it is applied to the decoration of ſomething more excellent than itſelf. All that pious verſe can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for theſe purpoſes it may be very uſeful; but it ſupplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Chriſtian Theology are too ſimple for eloquence, too ſacred for fiction, and too majeſtick for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the ſidereal hemiſphere.

As much of Waller's reputation was owing to the ſoftneſs and ſmoothneſs of his Numbers; it is proper to conſider thoſe minute particulars to which a verſifier muſt attend.

He

He certainly very much excelled in ſmoothneſs moſt of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced. The Poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation, which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have ſtudied with advantage the poem of Davies*, which, though merely philoſophical, yet ſeldom leaves the ear ungratified.

But he was rather ſmooth than ſtrong; of *the full reſounding line*, which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. The critical deciſion has given the praiſe of ſtrength to Denham, and of ſweetneſs to Waller.

His excellence of verſification has ſome abatements. He uſes the expletive *do* very frequently; and though he lived to ſee it almoſt univerſally ejected, was not more care-

* Sir John Davies, entituled, "Noſce teipſum. This "Oracle expounded in two Elegies; I. Of Humane Know-"ledge; II. Of the Soule of Man and the Immortalitie "thereof, 1599." R.

ful

ful to avoid it in his laſt compoſitions than in his firſt. Praiſe had given him confidence; and finding the world ſatisfied, he ſatisfied himſelf.

His rhymes are ſometimes weak words: *ſo* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

His double rhymes, in heroick verſe, have been cenſured by Mrs. Philips, who was his rival in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pompey; and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He ſometimes uſes the obſolete termination of verbs, as *waxeth*, *affecteth*; and ſometimes retains the final ſyllable of the preterite, as *amazed*, *ſuppoſed*, of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is ſparing; but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The

The general character of his poetry is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely ſublime. He ſeems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are ſuch as a liberal converſation and large acquaintance with life would eaſily ſupply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty which they are now often ſuppoſed to want by thoſe who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them firſt. This treatment is unjuſt. Let not the original author loſe by his imitators.

Praiſe, however, ſhould be due before it is given. The author of Waller's Life aſcribes to him the firſt practice of what Erythræus and ſome late critics call *Alliteration*, of uſing in the ſame verſe many words beginning with the ſame letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was ſo frequent among early writers, that Gaſcoigne, a writer of the ſixteenth century, warns the young poet againſt affecting it; Shakſpeare, in the *Midſummer Night's Dream*, is ſuppoſed to ridicule it; and in another

ther play the ſonnet of Holofernes fully diſplays it.

He borrows too many of his ſentiments and illuſtrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities, which they introduced ſo frequently, were conſidered as realities, ſo far as to be received by the imagination, whatever ſober reaſon might even then determine. But of theſe images time has tarniſhed the ſplendor. A fiction, not only detected but deſpiſed, can never afford a ſolid baſis to any poſition, though ſometimes it may furniſh a tranſient alluſion, or ſlight illuſtration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praiſe of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added ſomething to our elegance of diction, and ſomething to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Taſſo ſaid, with equal ſpirit and juſtice of himſelf and Guarini, when, having peruſed the *Paſtor Fido*, he cried out, "If he had not read *Aminta*, he had not "excelled it."

AS Waller profeſſed himſelf to have learned the art of verſification from Fairfax, it has been thought proper to ſubjoin a ſpecimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's tranſlation, will perhaps not be ſoon reprinted. By knowing the ſtate in which Waller found our poetry, the reader may judge how much he improved it.

1.

Erminia's ſteed (this while) his miſtreſſe bore
Through forreſts thicke among the ſhadie treene,
Her feeble hand the bridle raines forlore,
Halfe in a ſwoune ſhe was for feare I weene;
But her ſwift courſer ſpared nere the more,
To beare her through the deſart woods unſeene
Of her ſtrong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,
And ſtill purſu'd, but ſtill purſu'd in vaine.

2.

Like as the wearie bounds at laſt retire,
Windleſſe, diſpleaſed, from the fruitleſſe chace,
When the ſlie beaſt Tapiſht in buſh and brire,
No art nor paines can rowſe out of his place:
The Chriſtian knights ſo full of ſhame and ire
Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace!
Yet ſtill the fearfull Dame fled, ſwift as winde,
Nor euer ſtaid, nor ever lookt behinde.

3. Through

3.

Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, she
Withouten comfort, companie, or guide, [drived,
Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,
She heard and saw her greefes, but nought beside.
But when the sunne his burning chariot diued
In Thetis wauve, and wearie teame vnside,
On Iordans sandie banks her course she staid,
At last, there downe she light, and downe she laid.

4.

Her teares, her drinke; her food, her sorrowings,
This was her diet that vnhappie night;
But sleepe (that sweet repose and quiet brings)
To ease the greefes of discontented wight,
Spread foorth his tender, soft, and nimble wings,
In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright;
And loue, his mother, and the graces kept
Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie slept.

5.

The birds awakte her with their morning song,
Their warbling musicke pearst her tender ears;
The murmuring brookes and whistling windes among
The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parasid heare;
Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along [weare;
Of swaines and shepherd groomes, that dwellings
And that sweet noise, birds winds, and waters sent,
Prouokte again the virgin to lament.

6.

Her plaints were interrupted with a ſound,
That ſeem'd from thickeſt buſhes to proceed,
Some iolly shepherd ſung a luſtie round,
And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;
Thither ſhe went, an old man there ſhe found,
(At whoſe right hand his little flock did feed)
Sat making baſkets, his three ſonnes among,
That learn'd their father's art, and learn'd his ſong.

7.

Beholding one in ſhining armes appeare
The ſeelie man and his were ſore diſmaid;
But ſweet Erminia comforted their feare,
Her ventall vp, her viſage open laid,
Your happie folke, of heau'n beloued deare,
Work on (quoth ſhe) upon your harmleſſe traid,
Theſe dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring
To your ſweet toile, nor thoſe ſweet tunes you ſing.

8.

But father, ſince this land, theſe townes and towres,
Deſtroied are with ſword, with fire and ſpoile,
How may it be unhurt, that you and yours
In ſafetie thus, applie your harmleſſe toile?
My ſonne (quoth he) this pore eſtate of ours
Is euer ſafe from ſtorm of warlike broile;
This wilderneſſe doth vs in ſafetie keepe,
No thundring drum, no trumpes breakes our ſleepe.

9.

Haply iuſt heau'ns defence and ſhield of right,
Doth loue the innocence of ſimple ſwains,
The thunderbolts on higheſt mountains light,
And ſeld or neuer ſtrike the lower plaines.
So kings haue cauſe to feare *Bellonaes* might,
Not they whoſe ſweat and toile their dinner gaines,
Nor euer greedie ſoldier was entiſed
By pouertie, neglected and deſpiſed.

10.

O pouertie, chefe of the heau'nly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne!
No wiſh for honour, thirſt of others good,
Can moue my hart, contented with mine owne:
We quench our thirſt with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poiſon ſhould therein be throwne:
Theſe little flocks of ſheepe and tender goates
Giue milke for food, and wool to make us coates.

11.

We little wiſh, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed;
Theſe are my ſonnes, their care preſerues from ſtealth
Their father's flocks, nor ſeruants moe I need:
Amid theſe groues I walke oft for my health,
And to the fiſhes, birds, and beaſtes giue heed;
How they are fed, in forreſt, ſpring and lake,
And their contentment for enſample take.

12. Time

12.

Time was (for each one hath his doting time,
Theſe ſilver locks were golden treſſes than)
That countrie life I hated as a crime,
And from the forreſts ſweet contentment ran,
To Memphis' ſtately pallace would I clime,
And there became the mightie Caliphes man,
And though I but a ſimple gardner weare,
Yet could I marke abuſes, ſee and heare.

13.

Entiſed on with hope of future gaine,
I ſuffred long what did my ſoule diſpleaſe;
But when my youth was ſpent, my hope was vaine,
I felt my native ſtrength at laſt decreaſe;
I gan my loſſe of luſtie yeeres complaine,
And wiſht I had enjoy'd the countries peace;
I bod the court farewell, and with content
My later age here have I quiet ſpent.

14.

While thus he ſpake, Erminia huſht and ſtill
His wiſe diſcourſes heard, with great attention,
His ſpeeches grave thoſe idle fancies kill,
Which in her troubled ſoule bred ſuch diſſention;
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within theſe woods to dwell was her intention,
Till fortune ſhould occaſion new afford,
To turne her home to her deſired Lord.

15.

She ſaid therefore, O ſhepherd fortunate!
That troubles ſome didſt whilom feele and proue,
Yet liueſt now in this contented ſtate,
Let my miſhap thy thoughts to pitie moue,
To entertaine me as a willing mate
In ſhepherd's life, which I admire and loue;
Within theſe pleaſant groues perchance my hart,
Of her diſcomforts, may vnload ſome part.

16.

If gold or wealth of moſt eſteemed deare,
If iewels rich, thou diddeſt hold in priſe,
Such ſtore thereof, ſuch plentie haue I ſeen,
As to a greedie minde might well ſuffice:
With that downe trickled many a ſiluer teare,
Two chriſtall ſtreames fell from her watrie eies;
Part of her ſad misfortunes than ſhe told,
And wept, and with her wept that ſhepherd old.

17.

With ſpeeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare
Towards his cottage gently home to guide;
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,
Yet welcomde her, and plaſt her by her ſide.
The Princeſſe dond a poore paſtoraes geare,
A kerchiefe courſe vpon her head ſhe tide;
But yet her geſtures and her lookes (I geſſe)
Were ſuch, as ill beſtem'd a ſhepherdeſſe.

18.

Not thoſe rude garments could obſcure, and hide
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,
Nor was her princely ofspring damnifide,
Or ought diſparag'de, by thoſe labours bace;
Her little flocks to paſture would ſhe guide,
And milke her goates, and in their folds them place,
Both cheeſe and butter could ſhe make, and frame
Her ſelfe to pleaſe the ſhepherd and his dame.

POMFRET.

OF Mr. JOHN POMFRET nothing is known but from a ſlight and confuſed account prefixed to his poems by a nameleſs friend; who relates, that he was the ſon of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bedfordſhire; that he was bred at Cambridge *; entered into orders, and was rector of Malden in Bedfordſhire, and might have riſen in the Church; but that when he applied to Dr. Compton, biſhop of London, for inſtitution to a living of conſiderable value, to which he had been preſented, he

* He was of Queen's College there, and, by the Univerſity regiſter, appears to have taken his Bachelor's degree in 1684, and his Maſter's in 1698. H.

found

found a troubleſome obſtruction raiſed by a malicious interpretation of ſome paſſage in his *Choice*; from which it was inferred, that he conſidered happineſs as more likely to be found in the company of a miſtreſs than of a wife.

This reproach was eaſily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as to all other men who plan ſchemes of life; he had departed from his purpoſe, and was then married.

The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal conſequence: the delay conſtrained his attendance in London, where he caught the ſmall-pox, and died in 1703, in the thirty-ſixth year of his age.

He publiſhed his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of that claſs of readers, who, without vanity or criticiſm, ſeek only their own amuſement.

His *Choice* exhibits a ſyſtem of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; ſuch a ſtate as affords plenty

and tranquillity, without excluſion of intellectual pleaſures. Perhaps no compoſition in our language has been oftener peruſed than Pomfret's *Choice*.

In his other poems there is an eaſy volubility; the pleaſure of ſmooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppreſſed with ponderous or entangled with intricate ſentiment. He pleaſes many, and he who pleaſes many muſt have ſome ſpecies of merit.

DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorſet the character has been drawn ſo largely and ſo elegantly by Prior, to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a caſual hand; and, as its author is ſo generally read, it would be uſeleſs officiouſneſs to tranſcribe it.

CHARLES SACKVILLE was born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a little before the Reſtoration. He was choſen into the firſt parliament that was called, for Eaſt Grinſtead in Suſſex, and ſoon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleaſures which young men of high rank, who aſpired

aſpired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themſelves intitled to indulge.

One of theſe frolicks has, by the induſtry of Wood, come down to poſterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurſt, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-ſtreet by Covent-garden, and, going into the balcony, expoſed themſelves to the populace in very indecent poſtures. At laſt, as they grew warmer, Sedley ſtood forth naked, and harangued the populace in ſuch profane language, that the publick indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the door, and, being repulſed, drove in the performers with ſtones, and broke the windows of the houſe.

For this miſdemeanor they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds: what was the ſentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remiſſion from the king; but (mark the friendſhip of the diſſolute!) they begged the fine for themſelves, and exacted it to the laſt groat.

In

In 1665, Lord Buckhurſt attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ſhips were taken, fourteen others were deſtroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beſide him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is ſaid to have compoſed the celebrated ſong, *To all you Ladies now at land*, with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit. Seldom any ſplendid ſtory is wholly true. I have heard from the late earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurſt had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or finiſhed it on the memorable evening. But even this, whatever it may ſubtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He was ſoon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and ſent on ſhort embaſſies to France.

In 1674, the eſtate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middleſex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorſet, and inherited the eſtate of his family.

In 1684, having buried his firſt wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and underſtanding.

He received ſome favourable notice from King James; but ſoon found it neceſſary to oppoſe the violence of his innovations, and with ſome other Lords appeared in Weſtminſter-hall to countenance the biſhops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day leſs ſupportable, he found it neceſſary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of thoſe Lords who ſat every day in council to preſerve the publick peace, after the king's departure; and, what is not the moſt illuſtrious action of his life,

was

was employed to conduct the princeſs Anne to Nottingham with a guard, ſuch as might alarm the populace, as they paſſed, with falſe apprehenſions of her danger. Whatever end may be deſigned, there is always ſomething deſpicable in a trick.

He became, as may be eaſily ſuppoſed, a favourite of King William, who, the day after his acceſſion, made him lord chamberlain of the houſehold, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among thoſe that were toſſed with the King in an open boat ſixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather, on the coaſt of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on January 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whoſe elegance and judgement were univerſally confeſſed, and whoſe bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rocheſter bore ample teſtimony in this remark: *I know not how it is, but* Lord Buckhurſt, *may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*

If such a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that his works were praised. Dryden, whom, if Prior tells truth, he distinguished by his beneficence, and who lavished his blandishments on those who are not known to have so well deserved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country superior to those of antiquity, says, *I would instance your Lordship in satire, and Shakspeare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all the satires were little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was a song of eleven stanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggerated praise falls on the encomiast, not upon the author; whose performances are, what they pretend to be, the effusions of a man of wit, gay, vigorous, and airy. His verses to Howard shew great fertility of mind, and his *Dorinda* has been imitated by Pope.

STEP-

STEPNEY.

GEORGE STEPNEY, deſcended from the Stepneys of Pendigraſt in Pembrokeſhire, was born at Weſtminſter in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune we have no account. Having received the firſt part of his education at Weſtminſter, where he paſſed ſix years in the College, he went at nineteen to Cambridge*, where he continued a friendſhip begun at ſchool with Mr. Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are ſaid to have been invited into publick life by the Duke of Dorſet.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, ſo that his time

* He was entered of Trinity College, and took his Maſter's degree in 1689. H.

ſeems

ſeems to have been ſpent in negociations. In 1692 he was ſent envoy to the Elector of Brandenburgh; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to the Elector of Saxony; in 1696 to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the Congreſs at Francfort; in 1698 a ſecond time to Brandenburgh; in 1699 to the King of Poland; in 1701 again to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the States General. In 1697 he was made one of the commiſſioners of trade. His life was buſy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is buried in Weſtminſter Abbey, with this epitaph, which *Jacob* tranſcribed:

H. S. E.
GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,
Vir
Ob Ingenii acumen,
Literarum Scientiam,
Morum Suavitatem,
Rerum Uſum,
Virorum Ampliſſimorum Conſuetudinem
Linguæ, Styli, ac Vitæ Elegantiam,
Præclara Officia cum Britanniæ tum Europæ
præſtita,
Sua ætate multum celebratus,
Apud poſteros ſemper celebrandus;
Plurimas

Plurimas Legationes obiit
Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,
Ut Auguſtiſſimorum Principum
Gulielmi & Annæ
Spem in illo repoſitam
Nunquam fefellerit,
Haud raro ſuperaverit.
Poſt longum honorum Curſum
Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,
Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ ſatis vixerat,
Animam ad altiora aſpirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand,

G. S.
Ex Equeſtri Familia Stepneiorum,
De Pendegraſt, in Comitatu
Pembrochienſi oriundus,
Weſtmonaſterii natus eſt, A. D. 1663.
Electus in Collegium
Sancti Petri Weſtmonaſt. A. 1676.
Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.
Conſiliariorum quibus Commercii
Cura commiſſa eſt 1697.
Chelſeiæ mortuus, &, comitante
Magna Procerum
Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compoſitions of Stepney *made grey authors bluſh*. I know not whether his poems will appear ſuch wonders to the preſent age. One cannot always eaſily find the reaſon for which the world has ſometimes conſpired to ſquander praiſe. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, becauſe the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not conſidered as rivals by the diſtributors of fame.

He apparently profeſſed himſelf a poet, and added his name to thoſe of the other wits in the verſion of Juvenal; but he is a very licentious tranſlator, and does not recompenſe his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a ſhort compoſition may give pleaſure. But there is, in the whole, little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.

J. PHI-

J. PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676, at Bampton in Oxfordſhire; of which place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was miniſter. The firſt part of his education was domeſtick; after which he was ſent to Wincheſter, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his biographer, he was ſoon diſtinguiſhed by the ſuperiority of his exerciſes; and, what is leſs eaſily to be credited, ſo much endeared himſelf to his ſchoolfellows by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur or ill-will, ſaw him indulged by the maſter with particular immunities. It is related, that, when he was at ſchool, he ſeldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his ſovereign pleaſure

was to ſit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by ſomebody, whoſe ſervice he found means to procure *.

At ſchool he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himſelf at Chriſt-church; a college at that time in the higheſt reputation, by the tranſmiſſion of Buſby's ſcholars to the care firſt of *Fell*, and afterwards of *Aldrich*. Here he was diſtinguiſhed

* Iſaac Voſſius relates, that he alſo delighted in having his hair combed when he could have it done by barbers or other perſons ſkilled in the rules of proſody. Of the paſſage that contains this ridiculous fancy, the following is a tranſlation: "Many people take delight in the rubbing "of their limbs, and the combing of their hair; but theſe "exerciſes would delight much more, if the ſervants at the "baths, and of the barbers, were ſo ſkilful in this art, "that they could expreſs any meaſures with their fingers. "I remember that more than once I have fallen into the "hands of men of this ſort, who could imitate any mea-"ſure of ſongs in combing the hair, ſo as ſometimes to ex-"preſs very intelligibly Iambics, Trochees, Dactyls, &c. "from whence there aroſe to me no ſmall delight." See his Treatiſe De Poematum cantu & viribus Rythmi. Oxon. 1673, p. 62. H.

as

as a genius eminent among the eminent, and for friendſhip particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra and Hippolytus*. The profeſſion which he intended to follow was that of Phyſick; and he took much delight in Natural Hiſtory, of which Botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confined to his friends and to the univerſity; till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which ſtruck the publick attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected.

This performance raiſed him ſo high, that when Europe reſounded with the victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult oppoſition to Addiſon, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is ſaid that he would willingly have declined the taſk, but that his friends urged it upon him. It appears that he wrote this poem at the houſe of Mr. St. John.

Blenheim was publiſhed in 1705. The next year produced his greateſt work, the poem upon *Cider*, in two books; which was

received with loud praiſes, and continued long to be read, as an imitation of Virgil's *Georgick*, which needed not ſhun the preſence of the original.

He then grew probably more confident of his own abilities, and began to meditate a poem on the *Laſt Day*; a ſubject on which no mind can hope to equal expectation.

This work he did not live to finiſh; his diſeaſes, a ſlow conſumption and an aſthma, put a ſtop to his ſtudies; and on Feb. 15, 1708, at the beginning of his thirty-third year, put an end to his life. He was buried in the cathedral of Hereford; and Sir *Simon Harcourt*, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a monument in Weſtminſter Abbey. The inſcription at Weſtminſter was written, as I have heard, by Dr. *Atterbury*, though commonly given to Dr. *Freind*.

His

His Epitaph at Hereford:

JOHANNES PHILIPS

Obit 15 die Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708. / Ætat. suæ 32.

Cujus
Ossa si requiras, hanc Urnam inspice:
Si ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule;
Si Tumulum desideras,
Templum adi *Westmonasterienſe*:
Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa & preclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat,
Inscriptio.
Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,
Testetur hoc saxum
A Maria Philips Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoriæ non sine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Westminster:

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,
Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama
JOHANNIS PHILIPS:
Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
Immortale suum Ingenium,
Eruditione multiplici excultum,
Miro animi candore,
Eximiâ morum simplicitate
Honestavit.

Litterarum Amœniorum ſitim,
Quam Wintoniæ Puer ſentire cœperat,
Inter Ædis Chriſti Alumnos jugiter explevit.
In illo Muſarum Domicilio
Præclaris Æmulorum ſtudiis excitatus,
Optimis ſcribendi Magiſtris ſemper intentus,
Carmina ſermone Patrio compoſuit
A Græcis Latiniſque fontibus feliciter deducta,
Atticis Romaniſque auribus omnino digna,
Verſuum quippe Harmoniam
Rythmo didicerat.
Antiquo illo, libero multiformi
Ad res ipſas apto prorſus, & attemperato,
Non numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,
Non Clauſularum ſimiliter cadentium ſono
Metiri:
Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono ſecundus,
Primoque pœne Par.
Res ſeu Tenues, ſeu Grandes, ſeu Mediocres
Ornandas ſumſerat,
Nuſquam, non quod decuit,
Et videt, & aſſecutus eſt,
Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
Fandi aúthor, & Modorum artifex.
Fas ſit Huic,
Auſo licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege diſcedere,
O Poeſis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
Alterum tibi latus claudere,
Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique ſtipantium
Non dedecebit Chorum.

SIMON

SIMON HARCOURT Miles,
Viri benè de ſe, de Litteris meriti
Quoad viveret Fautor,
Poſt Obitum piè memor,
Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.
J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P Archidiaconi
Salop, Filius, natus eſt Bamptoniæ
in agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.
Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praiſed, without contradiction, as a man modeſt, blameleſs, and pious; who bore narrowneſs of fortune without diſcontent, and tedious and painful maladies without impatience; beloved by thoſe that knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His converſation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which ſeems to have flowed only among his intimates, for I have been told, that he was in company ſilent and barren, and employed only upon the pleaſures of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he has found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of thoſe who pleaſe by

not offending, and whoſe perſon was loved becauſe his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had diſgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original deſign, unleſs it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Centos*. To degrade the ſounding words and ſtately conſtruction of Milton, by an application to the loweſt and moſt trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are preſented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of ſuch performances begins and ends with the firſt author. He that ſhould again adapt Milton's phraſe to the groſs incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, muſt yet expect but a ſmall part of the praiſe which Philips has obtained; he

can

can only hope to be conſidered as the repeater of a jeſt.

"The parody on Milton," ſays Gildon, "is the only tolerable production of its au-"thor." This is a cenſure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by thoſe who do not allow its ſupreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a ſcholar, *all inexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and ſtudies the world in a college. He ſeems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehenſion of the qualities neceſſary to the compoſition of a modern hero, which Addiſon has diſplayed with ſo much propriety. He makes *Marlborough* behold at a diſtance the ſlaughter made by *Tallard*, then haſte to encounter and reſtrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headleſs by his ſword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciouſly. Deformity is eaſily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wiſhes away, all that

that is obſolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verſe was harmonious, in proportion to the general ſtate of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reaſonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleaſing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips ſits down with a reſolution to make no more muſick than he found, to want all that his maſter wanted, though he is very far from having what his maſter had. Thoſe aſperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradiſe Loſt*, are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a preſent of wine and tobacco, which cannot be paſſed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits ſeveral artful accommodations of claſſick expreſſions to new purpoſes. It ſeems better turned than the odes of *Hannes* *.

To

* This ode I am willing to mention, becauſe there ſeems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the laſt. They all read;

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus inſidet,

The

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the *Georgicks*, may be given this peculiar praiſe, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and juſt; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of ſcience. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botaniſt, whoſe expreſſion was, that *there were many books written on the ſame ſubject in proſe, which do not contain ſo much truth as that poem.*

In the diſpoſition of his matter, ſo as to interſperſe precepts relating to the culture of trees, with ſentiments more generally alluring, and in eaſy and graceful tranſitions from one ſubject to another, he has very diligently imitated his maſter; but he unhappily pleaſed himſelf with blank verſe, and ſuppoſed that the numbers of Milton, which impreſs the mind with veneration, combined as they are with ſubjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be ſuſtained by images which

The author probably wrote,

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus inſidet. Dr. J.

at

at moſt can riſe only to elegance. Contending angels may ſhake the regions of heaven in blank verſe; but the flow of equal meaſures, and the embelliſhment of rhyme, muſt recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redſtreak* and *pearmain*.

What ſtudy could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficience cannot be ſupplied. He ſeems not born to greatneſs and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often ſurpriſe with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his laſt poem may be applied what Tully ſaid of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius.*

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been tranſcribed from the Bodleian manuſcripts.

" A prefatory Diſcourſe to the poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.

"It is altogether as equitable ſome account ſhould be given of thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their writings, as of thoſe who are renowned for great actions. It is but reaſonable they, who contribute ſo much to the immortality of others, ſhould have ſome ſhare in it themſelves; and ſince their genius only is diſcovered by their works, it is juſt that their virtues ſhould be recorded by their friends. For no modeſt men (as the perſon I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyricks; and it is very hard that they ſhould go without reputation, only becauſe they the more deſerve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we muſt be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and ſocial virtues are more eaſily tranſcribed. The Life of Cowley is more inſtructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wiſhed, ſince Mr. Philips had ſo many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had ſome of the abilities of his hiſtorian.

The

The Grecian philoſophers have had their Lives written, their morals commended, and their ſayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which moſt of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very juſt to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe muſt be acquainted with his accompliſhments. They give praiſe and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru's and Molieres as well as their Condés and Turennes; their Pelliſons and Racines have their elogies, as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praiſes of the learned.

I am ſatisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a ſubject of their panc-

panegyricks, and perhaps ſet in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to ſubmit.

I ſhall therefore endeavour to do juſtice to his memory, ſince nobody elſe undertakes it. And indeed I can aſſign no cauſe why ſo many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myſelf to give an account of him) ſhould forbear to celebrate the memory of one ſo dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work entirely belonging to me.

I ſhall content myſelf with giving only a character of the perſon and his writings, without meddling with the tranſactions of his life, which was altogether private: I ſhall only make this known obſervation of his family, that there was ſcarcely ſo many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are ſtill leaving), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful mother, like the mother of the gods, ſeems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though un-

common faculties. Of the living, neither their modeſty nor the humour of the preſent age, permits me to ſpeak: of the dead, I may ſay ſomething.

One of them had made the greateſt progreſs in the ſtudy of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly maſtered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorff. He could refute Hobbes with as much ſolidity as ſome of greater name, and expoſe him with as much wit as Echard. That noble ſtudy, which requires the greateſt reach of reaſon and nicety of diſtinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loſs to be deprived of one who underſtood a ſcience ſo neceſſary, and yet ſo unknown in England. I ſhall add only, he had the ſame honeſty and ſincerity as the perſon I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reaſon more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for thoſe poſts, which the modeſty of the latter made him refuſe. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which

which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, compoſed ſeveral very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have wrote as finely as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton, of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been ſo fit to deſcribe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and, while his brother was writing upon the greateſt men that any age ever produced, in a ſtyle equal to them, he might have ſerved as a panegyriſt on him.

This is all I think neceſſary to ſay of his family. I ſhall proceed to himſelf and his writings; which I ſhall firſt treat of, becauſe I know they are cenſured by ſome out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the leaſt conſiderable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the reſt. The ſtyle agreed ſo well with the burleſque, that the ignorant thought it could become

nothing elſe. Every body is pleaſed with that work. But to judge rightly of the other requires a perfect maſtery of poetry and criticiſm, a juſt contempt of the little turns and witticiſms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect underſtanding of poetical diction and deſcription.

All that have any taſte of poetry will agree, that the great burleſque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much eaſier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a maſter's hand.

It muſt ſtill be more acceptable than the low burleſque, becauſe the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itſelf entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The ſtyle of Billingſgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James's. A gentleman would

would take but little pleaſure in language, which he would think it hard to be accoſted in, or in reading words which he could not pronoûnce without bluſhing. The lofty burleſque is the more to be admired, becauſe, to write it, the author muſt be maſter of two of the moſt different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expoſe what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raiſe and elevate. We muſt read Virgil and Milton for the one, and Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave ſtyle, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of ſuch oppoſite natures, that they are ſeldom created by the ſame perſon. The man of mirth is always obſerving the follies and weakneſſes, the ſerious writer the virtues or crimes, of mankind; one is pleaſed with contemplating a beau, the other a hero: even from the ſame object they would draw different ideas: Achilles would appear in very different lights to Therſites and Alexander; the one would admire the courage and greatneſs of his ſoul; the other would ridicule the vanity and raſhneſs of his temper. As the ſatyriſt ſays to Hanibal:

—— I curre per Alpes
Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.

The contrariety of ſtyle to the ſubject pleaſes the more ſtrongly, becauſe it is more ſurpriſing; the expectation of the reader is pleaſantly deceived, who expects an humble ſtyle from the ſubject, or a great ſubject from the ſtyle. It pleaſes the more univerſally, becauſe it is agreeable to the taſte both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly ſo to thoſe who have a reliſh of the beſt writers, and the nobleſt ſort of poetry. I ſhall produce only one paſſage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaſkins:

My Galligaſkins, which have long withſtood
The winter's fury and encroaching froſts,
By time ſubdued (what will not time ſubdue!)

This is admirably pathetical, and ſhews very well the veciſſitudes of ſublunary things. The reſt goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetick and terrible complaint. Is it not ſurpriſing that the ſubject ſhould be ſo mean, and the verſe ſo pompous, that the leaſt things in his poetry, as in a microſcope, ſhould grow great

great and formidable to the eye; eſpecially conſidering that, not underſtanding French, he had no model for his ſtyle? that he ſhould have no writer to imitate, and himſelf be inimitable? that he ſhould do all this before he was twenty? at an age which is uſually pleaſed with a glare of falſe thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fuſtian? at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almoſt ſaid Virgil, were inconſiderable? So ſoon was his imagination at its full ſtrength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

This poem was written for his own diverſion, without any deſign of publication. It was communicated but to *me*: but ſoon ſpread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge; *and impudently ſaid to be corrected by the author.* This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts; or a title to his own writings. Xenophon anſwered the Perſian, who demanded his arms, "We have nothing now "left but our arms and our valour; if we "ſurrender the one, how ſhall we make uſe "of the other?" Poets have nothing but

their wits and their writings; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don't ſee what good the former can do them. To pirate, and publickly own it, to prefix their names to the works they ſteal, to own and avow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of but in England. It will ſound oddly to poſterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the moſt wiſe, moſt learned, and moſt generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanick ſhould be better ſecured than that of a ſcholar; that the pooreſt manual operations ſhould be more valued than the nobleſt products of the brain; that it ſhould be felony to rob a cobler of a pair of ſhoes, and no crime to deprive the beſt author of his whole ſubſiſtence; that nothing ſhould make a man a ſure title to his own writings but the ſtupidity of them; that the works of Dryden ſhould meet with leſs encouragement than thoſe of his own, Flecknoe, or Blackmore; that Tillotſon and St. George, Tom Thumb and Temple, ſhould be ſet on an equal foot. This is the reaſon why this very Paper has been ſo long delayed; and while the moſt impudent and ſcandalous libels are publickly

vended

vended by the pirates, this innocent work is forced to ſteal abroad as if it were a libel.

Our preſent writers are by theſe wretches reduced to the ſame condition Virgil was, when the centurion ſeized on his eſtate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Mæcenas of the preſent age, that will retrieve them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr. Philips; it helped him to a reputation, which he neither deſired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himſelf capable; but the event ſhewed his modeſty. And it was reaſonable to hope, that he, who could raiſe mean ſubjects ſo high, ſhould ſtill be more elevated on greater themes; that he, that could draw ſuch noble ideas from a ſhilling, could not fail upon ſuch a ſubject as the duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of heightening even the moſt low and trifling genius.* And, indeed, moſt of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing leſs to the poet than the patron. Men of the greateſt genius are ſometimes lazy, and want a ſpur; often modeſt,

modeſt, and dare not venture in publick; they certainly know their faults in the worſt things; and even their beſt things they are not fond of, becauſe the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil deſired his work might be burnt, had not the ſame Auguſtus, that deſired him to write them, preſerved them from deſtruction. A ſcribbling beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleaſure he finds in writing; but that is ſeldom, when people are neceſſitated to it. I have known men row, and uſe very hard labour, for diverſion, which if they had been tied to, they would have thought themſelves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work ſo much admired by ſome, and cenſured by others. I have often wiſhed he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who could have as little underſtood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

Falſe criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himſelf, in a very polite court, has

has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong ſide, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's caſe.*

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occaſion of their diſlike. People that have formed their taſte upon the French writers can have no reliſh for Philips: they admire points and turns, and conſequently have no judgement of what is great and majeſtick: he muſt look little in their eyes, when he ſoars ſo high as to be almoſt out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes thoſe paſſages of their own authors to be really ſublime which come the neareſt to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and fine one, and has more inſtances of the ſublime out of Ovid de Triſtibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

I ſhall

I ſhall allow, therefore, only thoſe to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their ſtandard.

But before I enter on this ſubject, I ſhall conſider what is particular in the ſtyle of Philips, and examine what ought to be the ſtyle of heroick poetry; and next inquire how far he is come up to that ſtyle.

His ſtyle is particular, becauſe he lays aſide rhyme, and writes in blank verſe, and uſes old words, and frequently poſtpones the adjective to the ſubſtantive, and the ſubſtantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uſes frequent appoſitions. Now let us examine, whether theſe alterations of ſtyle be conformable to the true ſublime.

* * * * * *

WALSH

WALSH.

WILLIAM WALSH, the ſon of Joſeph Walſh, Eſq. of Abberley in Worceſterſhire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood: who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham College.

He left the univerſity without a degree, and purſued his ſtudies at London and at home; that he ſtudied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect; for he became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, *the beſt critick in the nation.*

He was not, however, merely a critick or a ſcholar, but a man of faſhion, and, as Dennis remarks, oſtentatiouſly ſplendid in

his dreſs. He was likewiſe a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the ſhire for his native county in ſeveral parliaments; in another the repreſentative of Richmond in Yorkſhire; and gentleman of the horſe to Queen Anne, under the duke of Somerſet.

Some of his verſes ſhew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindneſs for Dryden, to whom he gave a Diſſertation on Virgil's Paſtorals, in which, however ſtudied, he diſcovers ſome ignorance of the laws of French verſification.

In 1705, he began to correſpond with Mr. Pope, in whom he diſcovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters are written upon the paſtoral comedy of the Italians, and thoſe paſtorals which Pope was then preparing to publiſh.

The kindneſſes which are firſt experienced are ſeldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walſh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among thoſe that had encouraged his juvenile ſtudies.

—Granville

——Granville the polite,
And knowing Walſh, would tell me I could write.

In his Eſſay on Criticiſm he had given him more ſplendid praiſe: and, in the opinion of his learned commentator, ſacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.

The time of his death I have not learned. It muſt have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope, and 1711, when Pope praiſed him in his Eſſay. The epitaph makes him forty-ſix years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himſelf.

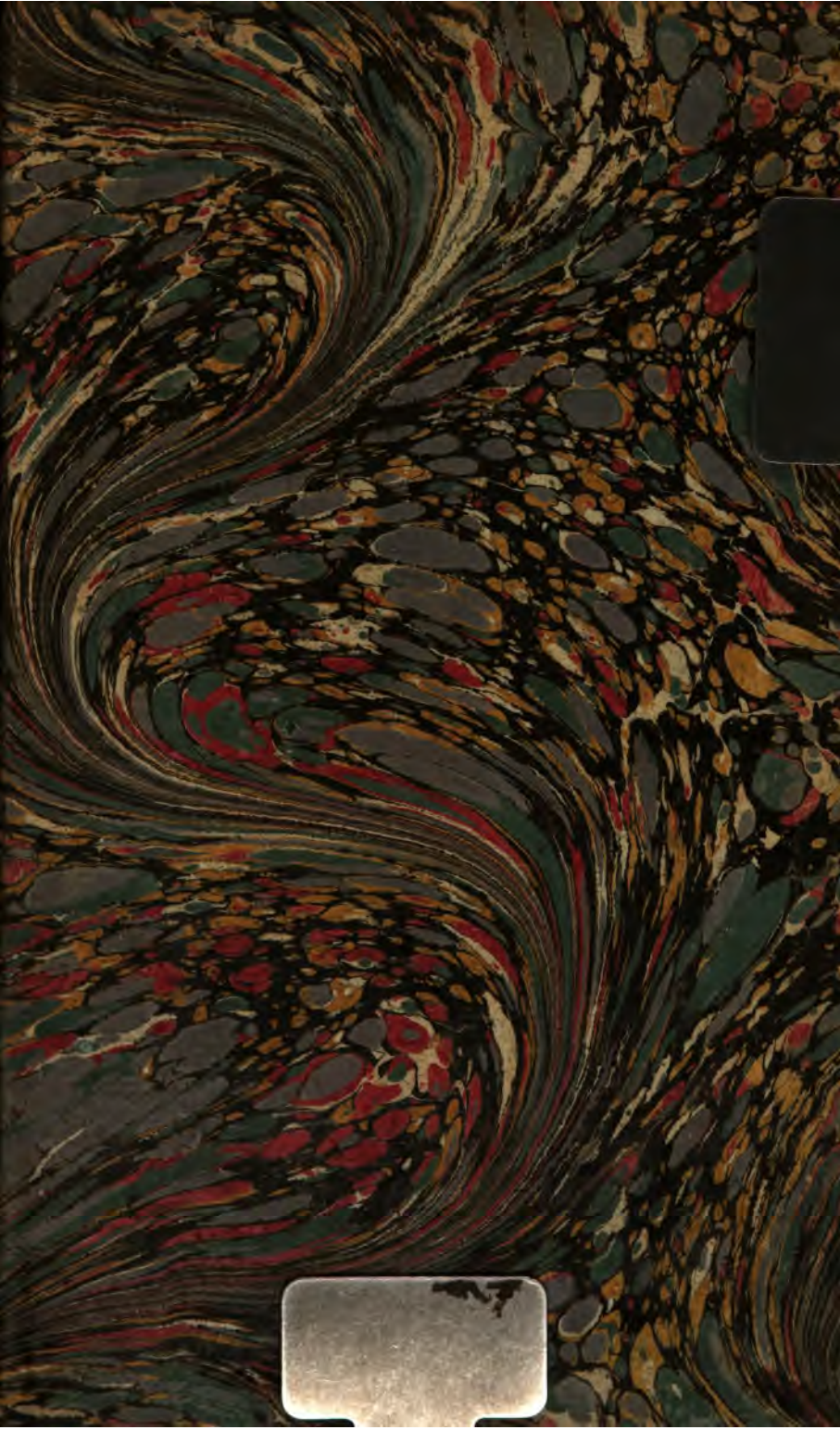
His works are not numerous. In proſe he wrote *Eugenia, a Defence of Women*; which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

Eſculapius, or the Hoſpital of Fools, publiſhed after his death.

A collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant, was publiſhed in the volumes

called Dryden's Miſcellany, and ſome other occaſional pieces.

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epiſtolary Compoſition and Amorous Poetry.

In his *Golden Age reſtored*, there was ſomething of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now ſtrikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the firſt ſtanzas are happily turned, and in all his writings there are pleaſing paſſages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and ſeldom riſes higher than to be pretty.

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